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SPEAIGHT.

MISS DAVIES GILBERT.

157, New Bond Street, W.



THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits

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## HOW THE . . . LABOURER LIVES.

MR. WILSON FOX has earned a name for himself as one of the most thorough and capable investigators into the condition of the rural working classes; but he has never produced anything more interesting than the eighth appendix to his second report on "The Wages, Earnings, and Conditions of Employment of Agricultural Labourers in the United Kingdom." We have reason to know that the figures have been collected with more than ordinary care and accuracy. They deal with the quantity and value of food consumed in working households, and were obtained after enquiry among a large number of farm labourers and their wives. What strikes us as most curious is the extraordinary variation of diet with the district. If we begin with the staff of life, we find that in the Northern Counties the farm labourer, his wife, and four children consume on an average 5lb. of bread and 23lb. of flour in a week, whereas in the Midland Counties these figures are very nearly reversed, and we have 27lb. of bread to 7lb. of flour, the explanation being that home baking is more common in the North. The figures for the other districts are, Eastern Counties 17lb. and 20lb., Southern and South Western Counties 20lb. and 9lb. Between the mean and the extreme, therefore, there is a difference of 10lb. of bread per week, but in the North they make up for the deficiency by eating much more beef or mutton than in the other parts of

England. A North Country household, for example, consumes 4lb. 10oz. of meat, as compared with the 1lb. 12oz. which would satisfy a household of the same size in the Eastern Counties. On the other hand, the latter gets through 2lb. 10oz. of pork, as compared with the 3oz. of pork in the North. In the North, too, the hind uses more sugar, more bacon, and much more new milk. It costs him on an average 14s. 10½d. to feed his family, as compared with 13s. 6½d. in the Midlands, 12s. 4½d. in East Anglia, 13s. 4½d. in the Southern Counties, and a general average of 13s. 6½d.

A close study of the figures brings into startling relief the narrow margin between the outgoings and the incomings of a labourer. In the Northern Counties a man earns directly and indirectly an average of 20s. 6d. a week, and out of this he pays 14s. 10½d. for food, leaving a trifle over 5s. for the rest of his requirements; £6 a year may be reckoned for clothing, and a man will scarcely find even the humblest garments for himself and wife and four children on less. Say that 2s. 6d. a week is taken off for that, then he has another 2s. 6d. left for fuel, light, and other necessities, and he will have to pay at the very least 1s. 6d. a week for rent; so that we arrive at the apparently paradoxical conclusion that he spends more than he gets. The difference is probably made up by what we may call pickings. The children earn a casual wage when very young, and where there is a garden or allotment some of the produce is probably sold; indeed, the moral of Mr. Wilson Fox's figures and observations lies in this, that the importance to a labourer of having a good garden becomes apparent from them. A smaller point, into which he has gone with considerable courage, is in regard to expenditure on tobacco and beer. There are many people, of course, who consider that these items should not figure at all in the cottage budget; but we have to take facts as they are, and, seeing that the average labourer will most certainly have his tobacco and his beer, it is just as well to know as near as we can the cost of them. No doubt the consumption varies largely with the district and with the wages earned. In some places the average amount of tobacco smoked by an individual may be put down as from 1½oz. to 2oz., but there are other places in which it rises to 3½oz. a week, the price of the tobacco being 3d. an ounce. It must also be very difficult to estimate the amount of beer consumed, since this must vary so much with the character of the man and also with the amount of his earnings. A shilling a week does not purchase a very large allowance of beer at 4d. a quart, yet correspondents put the amount spent on beer at between 1s. and 2s. a week, and more in cases where the man drinks at the expense of the comfort of his family.

Mr. Wilson Fox has collected examples of the class of food, and these are very instructive indeed, showing, we think, that on the whole the English agricultural labourer is accustomed to a healthy nourishing diet. In Northumberland he has for breakfast, bread, butter, cheese, bacon, and tea. Mr. Wilson Fox says nothing of oatmeal porridge. For dinner he gets broth, bacon, or cold beef, potatoes, suet or currant dumpling, rice or bread pudding, cabbage or turnips. On Sundays he has roast beef, with dumpling or rhubarb tart. For tea he has bread, butter, cheese, or jam, and tea. For supper, coffee, bread and cheese. Most men kill either two or three pigs in the year at an average weight of 20st. each, and they all have gardens. If we contrast this with Cambridgeshire we shall be very near obtaining the opposite poles. In the Isle of Ely the labourer has for breakfast tea with sugar but no milk, bread, butter, or lard; the man probably has a herring or small piece of pork. For dinner he has potatoes fried in lard, or pudding with pork and onions in it. On Sundays fresh beef or pork. For tea he has tea with sugar but no milk, bread and butter, or lard. For supper, bread and scraps left over from dinner. Nearly all the men buy a small pig, fatten and sell it. Most of them have gardens and about twenty poles of potato land. Some have allotments. We may take one more out of this interesting list. In Devonshire the labourer has for breakfast home-cured bacon and fried potatoes with eggs, if they do not cost more than 1s. a dozen. For dinner, meat fresh or salt, hot or cold vegetables, and suet pudding, while on Sundays he has roast fresh meat, potatoes, vegetables, and apple tart when in season. For supper a pasty, or fried fish and potatoes, and tea. The men generally keep pigs, and have gardens or allotments. They usually belong to benefit societies and other clubs. It would be most interesting to compare the condition of the agricultural labourer in Great Britain with that of the same member of society in Ireland, where the peasant buys cheap American bacon for his own consumption, and sells his own pig because "this is the gentleman that pays the rent."

## Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece this week is a portrait of Miss Davies-Gilbert, the daughter of Mr. Carew Davies Gilbert of the Manor House, Eastbourne.



IT is extremely difficult for an onlooker to define in exact terms what is taking place in Russia just now. Whether it should be described as a revolution, or only as a magnified outbreak of that Nihilism which for so long has been a disease eating into the very vitals of the Czar's kingdom, is open to doubt; but manifestly no reign of terror such as was witnessed in Paris is possible to-day. This is the era of machine guns, and machine guns will always give to a handful of soldiers a mastery over the largest mob. But, on the other hand, the mutterings of rage and rebellion have found deadly expression in the murder of Duke Sergius, as they found deadly expression before in the murder of the Minister of the Interior; and, though the aspect of things is changed with the changing years, yet the state of things now prevailing cannot be described as otherwise than a reign of terror. The Czar and his relatives must be in the position of not knowing who will next fall a victim to indignation and outrage. Nor does there seem any sign of the crisis bringing to the front some man of strong nerve and character who could at the same time fearlessly tackle the iniquities of Russian government and yet maintain law and order with the mob. Unless this is done, we can see nothing but ruin staring Russia in the face, since it is evident that General Kuropatkin, who is understood now to be preparing for another battle, is likely enough to add another chapter to the history of his defeats, and the passage of every day makes it more difficult to send him reinforcements and to maintain the army of which he is the head.

It is said that Londoners know less than almost any other inhabitant of the country of the passage of the seasons; but this is not altogether true. The dingy, smoky streets may remain very much what they are alike in spring, summer, autumn, and winter. But every other part of the country sends its early products to the metropolis. Indeed, the difficulty is to distinguish between native and foreign. "Violets dim" we have had all the winter, and it is not every purchaser who knows that only now are the little bunches being prepared in far-away Devonshire. But wherever spring brings early flowers, the eyes of the finders are turned to the London market. Snowdrops have long been figuring in the hands of the flower-seller, and now the primrose is beginning to make its appearance, accompanied by the daffodil. In a little while, no doubt, the ancient march of the flowers will be upon us, and we shall know that the winter is over and gone.

The coming of spring, though only heralded by milder winds and the opening of a few crocuses, has given the hint to the greater number of the St. James's Park gulls to leave for their country nesting quarters. Probably two-thirds of them have left, together with a great many of the mallards. On the other hand, this London lake gives a very interesting lesson as to the way in which wildfowl are increasing, both in number and tameness. This week their forces were joined by a pair of quite wild "golden eyes," the cock evidently an old bird, and in the very finest black and white plumage. A pair of shovellers also appeared, and attracted much attention. Often the last of wildfowl to become tame, coots have been steadily increasing for the last week, at least a dozen of them having appeared on the water. They have frequented the West Middlesex reservoirs, near Barnes, for some years past. Most of the male pochards left the park last week, but a few hen birds stayed behind. The pond seems full of natural food, and probably several of the ducks will stay to breed in the park.

The first harvest of the year is the cutting of the osiers, and that is now completed on most osier plots. In the Thames Valley the work is generally finished by February, or at latest by the end of that month. What the bamboo is to the inhabitants of the Far East, that the osier is, to some extent, to English needs. It is not stiff enough for a light pole, in the various senses in which the bamboo is used, and it is not hollow, and so available

as a pipe or a water-jar. But for all such articles as chairs, seats, baskets of every kind, from that which takes out the washing to the smallest cray-fish traps, basket "holders" in motor-cars, and waste-paper baskets, the light, strong, and useful osier holds its own. Basket-work pony-traps are now things of the past, though once much in favour; but there is a great demand for crates made out of the largest-sized willows in the Potteries, these being very well suited for the transport of china-ware packed in straw.

Want of water on the farms will soon be followed by want of water in the rivers, and fishermen are rather anxiously wondering what will be the state of the West Country and Northern trout streams when the season opens in March. Why the rivers of the North should be so much earlier than the Southern chalk streams is rather a puzzle. People will be having good sport with the partridge, woodcock, dark snipe, and March brown at the opening of April in Cumberland, when trout-fishers on the Kennet are praying for patience and waiting for May before laying a fly on the water at Hungerford, for instance. March floods in the North are by no means to be desired. They do not often occur, but when they do they seem to wash away, or destroy, the greater part of what, in a normal year, should be "fly" later on.

#### COMING.

The catkins are casting their dust to the breeze,  
That fierce through the hazels is blowing.  
The asphodel blossoms burst out 'neath the trees,  
On whose branches the pink buds are showing.  
In the hedgerows the primrose peeps out at the sun,  
In the wind the dead oak leaves are flying.  
The shepherd's hard work with the ewes is half done:  
By such signs we see winter is dying!

C. E. DE LA POER BERESFORD.

Mr. Wason, the Member for Orkney and Shetland, raised an important question in the House of Commons the other night. He suggested that the Central Government should pay for the damage done to roads, bridges, sewers, gas, and water mains by heavy motor-cars weighing up to twelve tons and driving at the rate of twelve miles an hour. Perhaps the suggestion was not as practical as it might be, but it shows that an important question is receiving attention, and it is as much for the interest of motorists as for others that it should be discussed. A great number of our roads at the present moment are totally unfit for the new form of traffic, and it does not seem reasonable that local bodies should be asked to undertake the work necessary to make them so, since much of the traffic referred to comes from a distance. At the same time, the highway in many parts of England demands complete reconstruction, and anybody who brings this before the eyes of the community is doing good work. As might have been expected, Mr. Grant Lawson threw cold water on the particular proposal laid before him, nor is it easy to see how he could have done otherwise; but that by no means implies that there is nothing to be remedied.

In this connection a suggestion made by Mr. Scott-Montagu deserves attention. He points out that mechanical haulage is much less wearing to the roadway than equine haulage. In the case of the latter the road is battered by the iron-shod horses' hoofs, that are like hammers delivering blows with a force ranging from 20lb. to 50wt., and, secondly, the narrow iron wheels are also very injurious. Now, in mechanical propulsion you get rid of the hammers or horses' feet, and you also substitute rubber tyres for iron wheels; while, thirdly, it is not unimportant to notice that with the motor there is much less scavenging required than with horses. These certainly are good arguments for the encouragement of mechanically-propelled vehicles in town, and, as their force begins to be felt, we may fairly expect that the number of these carriages will increase, while the horse-drawn carriage will go more and more out of fashion.

Lord Harrowby deserves honour for having at Sandon taken a very practical step towards stemming that migration from the village to the town which all of us deplore. He has built a club for the villagers, which in itself is a credit and an ornament to the place. In the interior there is a fine gymnasium 44ft. long by 22ft. wide, equipped with all the necessary apparatus, and a nicely-furnished reading-room, above which is an excellent billiard-room. A cricket club is to be formed in connection with it, and a verandah built, from which the games may be watched. The club, according to Lord Harrowby's statement, is to be managed by a committee selected from the members, and his own desire is that men of all classes should meet within the four walls—the farm lad, the mechanic, the squire, and the tenant. If Lord Harrowby's example were widely followed, the result



would be a sensible increase to the attractions of village life. It must be remembered that the boys and young men of the present day want amusements of this kind, and if they cannot have them in the village they will certainly seek them in the town.

A few days ago Sir Edward Fry delivered to the Yorkshire Society of Friends an address on commercial morality, which may be recommended to the attention of all who have the guidance of great business affairs. We do not think that they will dispute about the opinions he expressed. No one could possibly make out a plausible argument in favour of the system of making presents and giving secret tips in order to further transactions of buying and selling. These are direct temptations to the servant to be unfaithful to his master, nor will it be denied that under the specious pretence of giving Christmas boxes a great deal of commercial bribery takes place every year. But the question how we are to meet and remedy these evils is a difficult one. The offenders as a rule are very careful to keep within the law, and if they overstep its limits there is little chance of anybody knowing, except the parties directly concerned. The only way, therefore, of introducing better principles into commercial circles would appear to be by forming and nursing a strong public opinion directed against these practices. That, we take it, is what Sir Edward Fry was trying to do, and we are glad to notice that he had the hearty support of Mr. Rowntree and others of similar standing.

The trials carried out at Bisley, on February 11th, by six experts highly trained in the use of the rifle, are conclusive, and ought to be the death-warrant of the new short rifle. Experiments were made at ranges of 200yds., 600yds., and 800yds., with (a) three new short rifles; (b) the service long rifles, of which every man had his own; and (c) three service long rifles, fitted with the Peddie wind-gauge sight. In the unanimous opinion of all, the rifles, at the end of an exhaustive test, took this order of merit: 1, the long barrel fitted with the wind-gauge sight; 2, the long barrel as issued without the wind-gauge sight; 3, the new short barrel. The conclusions of the six riflemen, whose credentials are unimpeachable and whose opinion is entitled to all respect, are, in effect, that the new weapon is badly balanced, the weight being too much at the muzzle end, that its sights are less adapted to quick firing than those of the old service rifle, that its recoil is unduly heavy, that its accuracy as a weapon of precision is diminished, that towards dusk it emits a flash, which the old rifle does not emit. In brief, all that can be said in favour of the new rifle by a body of men of first-rate experience is that for cavalry it is an improvement on the carbine at present in use.

An interesting account is given in a military periodical of the measures of defence against a possible Russian invasion taken by the Swedish and Norwegian Governments in the far north of the two kingdoms, where the narrow strip of Scandinavia intervening between Russian territory and a seacoast which, unlike the Baltic, is not frozen up in winter, has suggested justifiable alarms. It is intended to fortify Narvik, the northern terminus of the railway line, possibly also Vardo, on the Varanger Fjord and Tromsø, while the fortress of Baden, at the point where the Narvik line crosses the Northern Railway of Sweden, is already far advanced towards completion. A noteworthy feature of these defensive preparations has been the voluntary adoption of military service by the population of the most northerly provinces of Norway, Nordland, and Finmarken, which for more than 500 miles border directly on Russian soil. Formerly exempted, owing to the hardships of life within the Arctic circle, eleven years ago they gave up this special privilege, and are for the future to be trained as a special military command, with particular attention to the needs of local defence.

Every now and again, from far-off corners of the Empire, we receive intelligence that brings home to us with ever fresh force the size, complexity, and formidable nature of that which Mr. Kipling has well called the "White Man's Burden." At the present time a commencement is being made with an irrigation scheme in the Punjab, which is estimated to cost about two and a-quarter million sterling. It will occupy in favourable circumstances nine years in the completion, and will irrigate, when finished, some two millions of acres. The water will be derived from three canals, the Upper Jehlam and Upper Chenab in the first instance, and the Lower Bari Doab Canal, which will tap the two former, later. Ultimately there is contemplated a further extension of the scheme, not included in the above estimates, by which the Wular Lake, in Cashmere, shall be connected to feed this system. The effect, it is anticipated, will be to preclude all possibility of famine in the district thus irrigated, and to bring into productive conditions a considerable area that is at present arid.

A most remarkable statement is very shortly made by the Colombo correspondent of *The Times*, to the effect that at a recent meeting of the Asiatic Society Sir H. A. Blake, the Governor of Ceylon, said that in the Sinhalese medical books of the sixth century there were descriptions of sixty-seven varieties of mosquito, conveying 424 kinds of malarial fever. Apart from the remarkable numbers both of mosquitos and malarial fevers, the statement is a very singular one. We have been rather by way of believing that the conveyance of a single type of malarial fever by a single kind of mosquito—the *Anopheles*—was one of the most recent discoveries of modern science, and the conveyance of "sleeping sickness" by a fly resembling the tsetse-fly seemed the latest and most triumphant endorsement of that discovery. We are now, as it seems, obliged to confess that in these so-called discoveries we have been anticipated in the East by some 1,200 years. It is to be hoped that we may hear a great deal more of these medical books.

The dimensions of the recently-opened cold storage premises at Southampton are such as to stimulate the imagination in regard to the huge quantities of food imported from abroad and kept for English use. The net storage capacity of the building is 2,000,000 cubic feet, or sufficient to store 4,800 quarters of beef and 155,000 carcasses of sheep, and yet leave 1,300,000 cubic feet for butter, fish, game, poultry, eggs, and other miscellaneous food. It will be the largest cold storage place in Europe, and affords extraordinary testimony to the growth of the trade, which did not begin till 1879, when Messrs. Bell and Coleman fitted out the steamer *Strathleven* with refrigerating apparatus and brought the first cargo of fresh meat from Australia to London. It was a business that developed very slowly until within a few years back, when it suddenly began to widen. The latest form that cold storage has taken is that of preserving fruit, and arrangements are being made for this purpose at Southampton; and no doubt it will facilitate the bringing into this country of the produce of foreign and colonial gardens and orchards.

#### "GOOD-BYE!"

From that sweet hope why did you shrink?  
 "God be with you!" was all I heard—  
 You said, "We will not speak but only think  
 "Good-bye!"  
 You did but bless me, dear my friend,  
 There was no terror in the word,  
 And I shall bear its message to the end . . .  
 "Good-bye!"

LILIAN STREET.

Under the far healthier conditions of the life of the masses in modern times, in even the most backward European countries, the once dreaded scourge of typhus now appears but seldom. In England its occurrence is very rare indeed, and its characteristic symptoms are now so little familiar to medical men that on the actual occurrence of several cases a few days ago among a family of aliens in East London the disease was at first supposed to be typhoid. Owing to the good working of the sanitary regulations, even in the worst London slums, there is but little fear of a serious outbreak in the present instance, though, with the exceptions of the much less deadly scarlet fever and of small-pox, when it attacks an unvaccinated population, there is no disease which is so terribly infectious. The "gaol fever," which formerly swept away not only prisoners, but judges and counsel at the assizes, was simply typhus under its colloquial name, and devastation was wrought by it in the wake of the Napoleonic victories which was far more horrible than the worst stories of disease reported from the Russian armies in Manchuria or at Port Arthur.

The announcement that from April 1st next an official parcels post system will be in operation between this country and the United States will be received with very general satisfaction on both sides of the ocean. Hitherto a private American express agency has carried on the existing service, but in addition to the greater security of permanence afforded by a regular Government system, the new and official tariff should prove distinctly cheaper. It will still be possible to forward parcels too bulky for the official service by the present means. The inland parcels post system seems now almost one of the primal necessities of life, yet it is not so many years ago that it was introduced from Germany, in which country English travellers had for some time observed its advantages with envious eyes.

Referring again to a subject previously mentioned in these notes, namely, the disfigurement of country districts by the erection of poles for telephone-wires, it is satisfactory to find from the letter of the Postmaster-General to Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, who lately



headed the deputation which waited on Lord Stanley to protest against the telephone-poles that it was proposed to erect along the Epping Forest road, that his department is fully alive to the desirability of injuring as little as possible the natural beauty of our landscape. He complains, however, that his hands are much tied by the little power of selection of alternative routes that is given by Parliament to his department, but expresses a hope that these powers may be enlarged at no distant date. He adds that he hopes to have the support of all lovers of open spaces in asking Parliament for these larger powers, and this is a hope in which he will very surely not be disappointed. With reference to the telephone-posts crossing Ashdown Forest, it is understood that the conservators have been unable to point out any alternative route, and that the original design has, therefore, perforce to be carried out.

All the spring fishing is for the moment practically suspended for lack of water in the rivers, February having singularly failed,

so far, to come up to its proverbial reputation as a "fill-dyke." Indeed, the deficiency in the water supply is so grave that it will be severely felt in the course of the year by a larger section of the community than is represented by those whose chief pleasure is the recreation of the contemplative man. It is but the other day that Mr. R. B. Marston was writing deploring the lack of water in those fine Hertfordshire trout streams—the Chess, the Mimram, and the Lea. Even now, at the season when springs should be at their highest, and even in the West Country, where a lack of rainfall is not common, the people are crying out for water. Taunton in Somersetshire is reported to be placed on short commons, and unless we have quite an unusual abundance of rain in the spring, the scarcity in the summer can hardly fail to be very serious indeed. All seems to point to the wisdom of Mr. Marston's advice that we should seek to improve our water supply by blocking back and storing up the vast quantities that now run to waste in the wet weather, rather than deplete the sources of our rivers by tapping them for the service of cities.

## THE WATERLOO CUP.

As a popular pastime greyhound coursing has undoubtedly fallen away from the position it held between twenty and thirty years ago. It is true that the meetings are as well attended as ever, and the enthusiasm of those who keep studs of greyhounds has not cooled with the advancing years.

On the other hand, the amusement has not that hold upon the public imagination which it exerted in the days, say, of Master McGrath, Bab at the Bowster, or Green Tick. In those days the excitement connected with the running for the Waterloo Cup was equalled only by that which the Derby or the University Boat Race created. Only an echo of those days has come down to us. A few keen sportsmen, but no large proportion of the outer world, knew enough not to be surprised when Pistol II.

got home an easy winner. There was a tendency to treat him as a rank outsider, and at the beginning of the meeting the betting was 100 to 1 against him. His lucky owner accepted a wager of £4,000 to £40, the largest of which anything has been heard during the meeting. Even when the semi-final

heats came to be run the betting was still against Pistol II., and it was believed, by those who counted themselves experts, that at the very last moment he would be beaten by Prince Plausible, who was perhaps unlucky in losing the deciding course. In a preceding course Prince Plausible had injured one of his toes, and his trainer had less confidence in his victory than the spectators. In the deciding course Pistol II. had all the luck. He got away well from the slips, and at one time was quite two lengths in front of



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"COUNTRY LIFE."



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A COURSE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

his opponent; but the latter, when the hare was reached, very quickly worked off his points. Both greyhounds, however, had the misfortune to slip, only Pistol II., being the quicker to recover himself, rushed forward and wrenched twice before Prince Plausible came up. Then the hare got over the bank, and the decision had to be made in favour of Pistol II. No fault could be found with it, and, in fact, the judging during the whole of the running for the Cup was so good that it led to no complaint or cavil, which is rather unusual at a Waterloo meeting. In summing up the merits of the dog, it is not possible to place him on a very high pedestal, although his victory was most meritorious. Curiously enough, it was this greyhound's third attempt at Altcar. After being beaten at Netherby and Corrie he beat Happy Mistake and First Water at Altcar in 1903, but in his turn was defeated by Paracelsus. Last year he won only one course at Altcar, and was beaten by the victim of this year. His pedigree shows, however, that he has the best blood in his veins, that of Greentick especially being prominent. During the running for the plate he beat Fahrenheit, Pegasus, Foggy Bell, Mallory, Mandini, and, lastly, Prince Plausible. So ended one of the pleasantest meetings ever held on this historic ground. It began a week last Wednesday in the most beautiful weather, and hares were both plentiful and in good condition, as may be guessed from the mere statement of the fact that the whole of the first forty-eight courses and two undecideds had been run by a quarter to three in the afternoon. On the Thursday the weather was even finer, as it had been somewhat marred on Wednesday by a shower. Once more the hares were both abundant and stout, so that every chance was given in the individual courses for the best dog to win. On the Friday the meteorological conditions were not so favourable, as, though the morning was fine, a good deal of rain had fallen through the night. The hares, too, were not so easily got.

Every year, after the running for the Waterloo Cup is finished, we are led into a speculation as to whether grey-



MR. BRUCE, MR. J. HARTLEY BIBBY, AND THE EARL OF SEFTON.

hound coursing is growing or decreasing in popularity. Perhaps, to answer the question satisfactorily, it would be advisable to analyse the world of sport and divide it into two separate parts. One is that in which success depends chiefly on the sportsman's effort, and the other that in which he derives his amusement from watching the performance of other creatures. The most familiar example of the former of these recreations is shooting. Here a man depends upon himself. It may be, and probably is, true that shooting to-day is much more luxurious than it was, say, in the time of Colonel Peter Hawker, who walked up his birds, or, what was a fashion of his time, rode up to them, and was thoroughly well tired at the end of the day, while the modern sportsman has his butts, where he can sit at rest till the birds are driven over by the beaters; exquisitely-trained retrievers bring the game to him, and loaders are at his back to charge the guns. Nevertheless, his performance must depend in the end on the accuracy of his own hand and eye, and shooting is unmistakably growing in favour. Where it was practically confined before to the landed gentry, and a few indomitable sportsmen who followed their example, it is now the week-end amusement of thousands of hard-working City men who do not go out and make themselves ridiculous on the field like the persons whom Leech loved to caricature, but who can shoot well and account for their game in a manner that would be creditable anywhere. If we were to take a typical amusement wherein the sportsman is not so active, it would be hawking.

Undoubtedly it requires a great deal of skill, but this is to a large extent confined to the falconer and the group of enthusiasts by whom he is usually surrounded. What the ordinary spectator finds in hawking is no doubt a very pretty sight. The grace of motion could not be better exemplified than by a falcon, or a pair of falcons, ringing a quarry that has had the pluck to fly upward, or stooping at him from a height, making recoveries, and at times almost hanging in the air like an athlete performing on a tight-rope. Every game has votaries that never grow weary of it, and there are still falconers in Great Britain who think that life possesses no joy equal to that which they feel when on an open plain following the hawks on foot or horseback, and watching the magnificent evolutions which the birds perform in the air. But the number of such enthusiasts must always be limited. The ordinary man soon grows wearied of a pleasure in which he can take no active share. Any billiard player, for instance, will admit that after he has watched the champions playing for a little while he becomes wearied of it, and would prefer to go and play an indifferent game himself. So it is with the majority of those who go out to watch falconry. There is nothing for them to do, and soon or late they may not, perhaps, grow weary, but they would like to be actively engaged. Now it is an interesting question to ask how far this applies to greyhound coursing. It is one of the very few forms of hunting that still survive, and in the others a great deal is left for the followers of the Hunt to do. In fox-hunting, for instance, a common complaint of Masters is that men go out for riding far more than for hunting, and in deer-hunting everybody either takes a hand or is extremely excited in regard to the methods by which the otter is dislodged from hisholt or traced in his cunning and devious flight. What is true of fox-hunting applies to all the forms of stag-hunting now in vogue, though we think that the most amusing way of chasing the deer is that which by the necessity of the time has grown obsolete.



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READY FOR THE FRAY.

"C.L."



## FROM THE FARMS.

ISLINGTON.

**A**T no distant time the question seems likely to arise as to whether it would be advisable or not to enlarge the premises of the Agricultural Hall at Islington. At present it is somewhat too small for the requirements. The London County Council has had to interfere, and, practically speaking, forbid the entry of more than 700 horses at the Shire Horse Show. This must have involved considerable disappointment, because there is an annual increase of the number of those who like to have their animals on view at this the most important show of cart horses held during the year.

IRISH LABOURERS, DRINK, AND TOBACCO.

In the report by Mr. Wilson Fox referred to in our leading article there is a curious story told by a Local Government Board inspector, who says that, "generally speaking, the labourers are sober and steady so long as they keep out of the town and small villages. A labourer might consume 3s. worth of porter at one fair; but it is to be remembered that he will probably not attend another for three months. As a rule, not more than £1 a year is spent on liquor, if so much." We suppose that for porter a labourer would pay about 2s. a pint, in which case this one must have drunk eighteen pints in one day. It is no wonder that he did not have any more for three months. As regards the consumption of tobacco, the returns show that the men generally smoke from one to three ounces a week. A Local Government Board inspector in Ulster writes: "Probably three-fourths, at all events, of the ordinary labourers smoke. Half a pound a month would not be at all an excessive allowance."

## THE IRISHMAN'S FOOD.

An old labourer from King's County, who seems to be typical of many others, gives the following account of his day: "I get up at 4 a.m. and the wife makes me a cup of tea. I start off at 5 a.m., having had breakfast, which consists of griddle bread (I never use bought bread) and a bit of butter, if we have it, and a cup of tea. I eat only a cut of bread, not more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. We only have butter when I am working at a job. I get up to my work about 6 a.m., and have a rest till 6.30, when we begin work, and we go on till 2 p.m. Generally we get dinner at twelve or one o'clock, but on my present job we do not break off until 2 p.m. for dinner, which I carry with me, and consists of bread and butter and tea—much the same as breakfast, only more of it. If I am at home and there are any potatoes, my dinner would consist of potatoes and milk (if we could get the latter), and we try now and then, when our means allow it, to have a bit of bacon, which costs 6d. per lb., this meat not more than once or twice a week. Work commences again at 3 p.m., and we go on till 7 p.m., and when I get home I have my supper about 8 p.m. Supper consists of tea, an egg or two when I am working and can afford it, and bread and butter. This is the principal meal, and after it I go to bed about 8.45 p.m. or 9 p.m. We buy eggs from the farmer 7d. per dozen for ducks' and 6d. for hens' eggs. We pay 1d. a pint for milk, and cannot always get it. We substitute sometimes an egg or a bit of butter in the tea for milk when we cannot buy the latter. You are lucky when you have a good neighbour who will supply milk; for the one who has a sup of it there are three go without it."



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"C.L."

## THE WINTER DROUGHT.

It is a strange thing, and deserving to be recorded, that many parts of England are at the present time suffering from the effects of a winter drought. According to tradition, February is supposed to rectify any defects in the rainfall during the preceding months; but, so far, it has not lived up to its reputation. We have had one or two showers of rain, a little snow, a little frost, and a good deal of sunshine; so that the end of the month promises to see the supply of water rather shorter than it was at the beginning. One earnestly hopes that the rains will not fall in March, as in that month of seed-sowing a dry bed is of so much importance. Nor can one say that the drought has as yet done any particular damage. On the contrary, it has facilitated many spring operations, and certainly has been far from hurtful to the lambs which now are more and more peopling garth and homestead. In a little while horse-breeders will be having their foals and owners of cows their calves, and young things of all descriptions flourish better in dry than they do in damp weather. Moreover, it generally happens in England that when we least desire it the rain comes down in torrents; so that not for the moment do we wish to raise a lament over the winter drought.

## CANADIAN CATTLE.

The cattle-raisers of Canada very evidently deem them-

selves to have some real cause for grievance against the Home authorities for the continued embargo excluding the importation of live cattle from the Dominion into this country. The manner in which they are giving voice to their complaint is so eminently moderate, and so expressive of the ardent loyalty that they have shown so often and so variously, that it has a special claim to attention. The High Commissioner points out that in 1896, the year in which the exclusion of live animals was made permanent, the Canadian Government gave the Imperial Government what the former deemed fully adequate evidence that Canada was free

from pleuro-pneumonia. The object in bringing forward these points anew at the present time is to remind the Imperial Government that the Dominion is not wholly satisfied with the existing regulations. It is a case which may perhaps justify at least the appointment of a Commission of Enquiry.

ST. BRIDGET OF . . .  
THE SHORES.

BY FIONA MACLEOD.

**I**HAVE heard many names of St. Bridget, most beloved of Gaelic saints, with whom the month of February is identified . . . the month of 'Bride min, gentle St. Bride' . . . *Brigid boidheach Muine Chriosd*, Bride the Beautiful, Christ's Foster Mother . . . but there are three so less common that many even of my readers familiar with the Highland West may not know them. These are 'the Fair Woman of February,' St. Bride of the Kindly Fire, and 'St. Bride (or Bridget) of the Shores.' They are of the Isles, and may be heard in some of the *sgeulachdan gaidhealach*, or Gaelic tales, still told among seafaring and hill folk, where the curse of cheap ignoble periodicals is unknown and books are rare. True,



in several of the isles . . . Colonsay, Tiree, the Outer Hebrides. . . 'St. Bride of the Shores' is not infrequent in songs and seasonal hymns, for when her signals are seen along the grey beaches, on the sandy machars, by the meadow path, the glen-track, the white shore-road, the islanders know that the new year is disclosed at last, that food, warmth, and gladness are coming out of the south. As 'the Fair Woman of February,' through whatever other designation St. Bride goes by, she is often revealed. Her humble yellow fires are lit among the grasses, on the shore-ways, during this month. Everywhere in the Gaelic lands 'Candlemas-Queen' is honoured at this time. *Am Fheill Bhride*, the Festival of St. Bridget, was till recently a festival of joy throughout the west, from the Highland Line to the last weedy shores of Barra or the Lews: in the isles and in the remote Highlands, still is.

It is an old tale, this association of St. Bridget with February. It goes further back than the days of the monkish chroniclers who first attempted to put the disguise of verbal Christian raiment on the most widely loved and revered beings of the ancient Gaelic pantheon. Long before the maiden Brigid (whether of Ireland or Scotland matters little) made her fame as a 'daughter of God'; long before to Colum in Iona or to Patrick 'the great Cleric' in Ireland 'Holy St. Bride' revealed in a vision the service she had done to Mary and the Child in far-away Bethlehem in the East; before ever the first bell of Christ was heard by startled Druids coming across the hills and forest lands of Gaul, the Gaels worshipped a Brighde or Bride, goddess of women, of fire, of poetry. When, to-day, a Gaelic islesman alludes to Bridget of the Songs, or when a woman of South Uist prays to good St. Bride to bless the empty cradle that is soon to be filled, or when a shennachie or teller of tales speaks of an oath taken by Bridget of the Flame, they refer, though probably unconsciously, to a far older Brighid than do they who speak with loving familiarity of *Muime Chríod*, Christ's Foster Mother, or *Brighid-nam-Bratna*, St. Bride of the Mantle. They refer to one who in the dim, far-off days of the forgotten pagan world of our ancestors was a noble and great goddess. They refer to one to whom the women of the Gael went with offerings and prayers, as went the women of ancient Hellas to the temples of Aphrodité, as went the Syrian women to the altars of Astarte, as went the women of Egypt to the milk-fed shrines of Isis. They refer to one whom the Druids held in honour as a torch bearer of the eternal light, a Daughter of the Morning, who held sunrise in one hand as a little yellow flame, and in the other held the red flower of fire without which men would be as the beasts who live in caves and holes, or as the dark *Fómor* who have their habitations in cloud and wind and the wilderness. They refer to one whom the bards and singers revered as mistress of their craft, she whose breath was a flame, and that flame song: she whose secret name was fire and whose inmost soul was radiant air, she therefore who was the divine impersonation of the divine thing she stood for, Poetry.

'St. Bride of the Kindly Fire,' of whom one may hear to-day as "oh, just *Bhrighde mín Muim* (gentle St. Bride the Foster Mother), she herself an' no other," is she, that ancient goddess, whom our ancestors saw lighting the torches of sunrise on the brows of hills, or thrusting the quenchless flame above the horizons of the sea: whom the Druids hailed with hymns at the turn of the year, when, in the season we call February, the firstcomers of the advancing Spring are to be seen on the grey land or on the grey wave or by the grey shores: whom every poet, from the humblest wandering singer to Oisín of the Songs, from Oisín of the Songs to Angus Og on the rainbow or to Midir of the Under-world, blessed, because of the flame she put in the heart of poets as well as the red life she put in the flame that springs from wood and peat. None forgot that she was the daughter of the ancient God of the Earth, but greater than he, because in him there was but earth and water, whereas in her veins ran the elements of air and fire. Was she not born at sunrise? On the day she reached womanhood did not the house wherein she dwelled become wrapped in a flame which consumed it not, though the crown of that flame licked the high unburning roof of Heaven? In that hour when, her ancient divinity relinquished and she reborn a Christian saint, she took the white veil, did not a column of golden light rise from her head till no eyes could follow it? In that moment when she died from earth, having taken mortality upon her so as to know a divine resurrection to a new and still more enduring Country of the Immortals, were there not wings of fire seen flashing along all the shores of the west and upon the summits of all Gaelic hills? And how could one forget that at any time she had but to bend above the dead, and her breath would quicken, and a pulse would come back into the still heart, and what was dust would arise and be once more glad.

The Fair Woman of February is still loved, still revered. Few remember the last fading traditions of her ancient greatness: few, even, know that she lived before the coming of the Cross: but all love her, because of her service to Mary in Her travail and to the newborn Child, and because she looks with eyes of

love into every cradle and puts the hand of peace on the troubled hearts of women: and all delight in her return to the world after the ninety days of the winter-sleep, when her heralds are manifest.

What, then, are the insignia of St. Bridget of the Shores? They are simple. They are the dandelion, the lamb, and the sea-bird popularly called the oyster-opener. From time immemorial, this humble, familiar yellow plant of the wayside has been identified with St. Bride. To this day shepherds, on *Am Fheill Bhrighde*, are wont to hear among the mists the crying of innumerable young lambs, and this without the bleating of ewes, and so by that token know that Holy St. Bride has passed by, coming earthward with her flock of the countless lambs soon to be born on all the hillsides and pastures of the world. Fisher-folk on the shores of the west and on the far isles have gladdened at the first prolonged repetitive whistle of the oyster-opener, for its advent means that the hosts of the good fish are moving towards the welcoming coasts once more, that the wind of the south is unloosed, that greenness will creep to the grass, that birds will seek the bushes, that song will come to them, and that everywhere a new gladness will be abroad. By these signs is St. Bridget of the Shores known. One, perhaps, must live in the remote places, and where wind and cloud, rain and tempest, great tides and uprising floods are the common companions of day and night, in order to realise the joy with which things so simple are welcomed. To see the bright sunsweet face of the dandelion once more—*an dealan Dhé*, the little flame of God, *am bearnan Bhrighde*, St. Bride's forerunner—what a joy this is. It comes into the grass like a sunray. Often before the new green is in the blade it flaunts its bright laughter in the sea-bent. It will lie in ditches and stare at the sun. It will climb broken walls, and lean from nooks and corners. It will come close to the sands and rocks, sometimes will even join company with the sea-pink, though it cannot find footing where later the bindweed and the horned poppy, those children of the seawind who love to be near and yet shrink from the spray of the salt wave, defy wind and rain. It is worthier the name 'Traveller's Joy' than the wild clematis of the autumnal hedgerows: for its bright yellow leaps at one from the roadside like a smile, and its homeliness is pleasant as the gladness of playing children.

It is a herald of Spring that precedes even the first loud flute-like calls of the misselthrush. When snow is still on the track of the three winds of the north it is by the wayside, a glad companion. Soon it will be everywhere. Before long the milk-white sheen of the daisy and the moon-daisy, the green-gold of the tansy, the pale gold of the gorse and the broom, the yellow of the primrose and wild colchicum, of the cowslip and buttercup, of the copse-loving celandine and meadow-rejoicing crowfoot, all these yellows of first spring will soon be abroad: but the dandelion comes first. I have known days when, after midwinter, one could go a mile and catch never a glimpse of this bright comrade of the ways, and then suddenly see one or two or three, and rejoice forthwith as though at the first blossom on the blackthorn, at the first wild-roses, at the first swallow, at the first thrilling bells of the cuckoo. We are so apt to lose the old delight in familiar humble things. So apt to ignore what is by the way, just because it is by the way. I recall a dour old lowland gardener in a loch-and-hill-set region of Argyll, who, having listened to exclamations of delight at a rainbow, muttered "Weel, I juist think naethin ava' o' thon rainbows . . . ye can see one whenever ye tak the trouble to look for them hereabouts." He saw them daily, or so frequently that for him all beauty and strangeness had faded from these sudden evanescent Children of Beauty. Beauty has only to be perceptible to give an immediate joy, and it is no paradoxical extravagance to say that one may receive the thrilling communication from 'the little flame of God' by the homely roadside as well as from these leaning towers built of air and water which a mysterious alchemy reveals to us on the cloudy deserts of heaven. "Man is surprised," Emerson says, "to find that things near and familiar are not less beautiful and wondrous than things remote." Certainly no Gaelic lover of St. Bride's Flower, of the Flower of February, but rejoices to see its welcome face after the snow and sleet of winter have first sullenly receded, if only for a time, and to know that St. Bride of the Shores wears it at her breast, and that when she throws it broadcast the world is become a green place again and the quickening sunlight a gladsome reality.

In these desolate far isles where life is so hard, where the grey winds from the north and east prevail for weeks at a time on the grey tempestuous seas, and where so much depends on such small things—a little driftwood, a few heaps of peat, a few shoals of fish now of one kind now of another, a few cartloads of seaweed, a rejoicing sound is that in truth when the *Gille-Bhrìde* is heard calling along the shores. Who that has heard its rapid whirling cry as it darts from haunt to haunt but will recognise its own testimony to being 'Servant of Breed' (the common pronunciation of the Gaelic Brighid or Bride)—for does it not

cry over and over again with swift incessant iteration, *Gilly-breed, gilly-breed, gilly-breed, gilly-breed.*

White may my milking be,

White as thee:

Thy face is white, thy neck is white,

Thy hands are white, thy feet are white,

For thy sweet soul is shining bright—

O dear to me,

O dear to see,

St. Bridget white!

Yellow may my butter be,

Firm, and round:

Thy breasts are sweet,

Firm, round and sweet,

So may my butter be:

So may my butter be O

Bridget Sweet!

Safe thy way is, safe, O

Safe, St. Bride:

May my kye come home at even,

None be fallin', none be leavin',

Dusky even, breath-sweet even,

Here, as there, where O

St. Bride thou

Keepst tryst with God in heav'n,

Seest the angels bow

And souls be shriven—

Here, as there, 'tis breath-sweet even

Far and wide—

Singeth thy little maid

Safe in thy shade

Bridget, Bride!

When the first lambs appear, many are the invocations among the Irish and Hebridean Gaels to good St. Bride. At



F. H. Evans.

THE PEACE OF NATURE.

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the hearth-side, too, the women, carding wool, knitting, telling tales, singing songs, dreaming—these know her, whether they name her in thought, or have forgotten what was dear wisdom to their mothers of old. She leans over cradles, and when babies smile they have seen her face. When the *cra'thull* swings

in the twilight, the slow rhythm, which is music in the mother's ear, is the quiet clapping of her hushing hands. St. Bride, too, loves the byres or the pastures when the kye are milked, though now she is no longer 'the Woman of February,' but simply "good St. Bride of the yellow hair."

## TAME REINDEER IN NORWAY.

A VAST expanse of rolling hills, sparsely inhabited in summer, in winter wholly deserted by man, a land destitute of trees, where patches of coarse grass and creeping shrubs alternate with tracts of stony desolation, a land of barrenness and utter solitude, and purest, most invigorating air—such is the country known as the "Vidden," or Highlands of Norway. Stretching inland at an average altitude of 3,000ft., they are seldom visited by the ordinary traveller, for the simple reason that there is little or no accommodation for tourists.

Here the wild reindeer roam at their will. And here also the Lapp with his tame herd drifts and wanders to and fro all the summer long. A primitive nomadic life is his. He carries on his back all the clothes that he possesses, sleeps under the open sky in a bag made of reindeer-skins, and varies his diet of coarse bread, coffee, and reindeer-flesh by catching occasional trout from the nearest stream. All his worldly goods are comprised in the forest of moving horns, which he



Mrs. Barnard.

THE LEADER OF THE HERD.

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beasts belong to the Lapp. Some are the property of a company, and others are owned by private persons.



Mrs. Barnard.

A FOREST OF MOVING HORNS.

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follows so patiently over hill and dale. In a herd like the one depicted only a portion of the three or four hundred

In the summer there is no difficulty in keeping the herd together. A man, a woman, and a dog are in attendance. One

wonders what they would do if the animals chose to stampede; pursuit would be useless, as anyone can realise who has ever seen the wild reindeer bounding lightly up the hillside. Fortunately, the tame herd seem quite contented with their lot. In the winter, when the Lapp is unable to follow so closely, and frequently loses them for days at a time, they do break away, and now and again a strayed one joins his wild brethren and returns to a life of freedom.

It was a grand sight to see the herd coming over the brow of a hill above the river where we were fishing. Suddenly the whole hillside seemed to be in motion, and the effect was enhanced by the fact that the dusky forms of the brown deer were scarcely visible, and the white ones moved like stately ghosts amid a swaying mass of vague, indeterminate forms.

"It is the reindeer herd,"



Mrs. Barnard.

GRAZING PEACEFULLY.

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said our Norwegian fisherman; "now you will get a 'hyance'" (chance) "to photograph them."

We did not anticipate how easy this would be, and scrambled breathlessly up the hill, snapping shots at impossible distances, till we found that our approach created no disturbance in the herd. The Lapp was friendly and cordial. He was also very drunk. He offered to lasso a "meget stor bock" (very big buck) and hold him in a good position to be photographed. For this purpose he produced a piece of rope 2yds. long, and, singing a doleful ditty, attempted to capture a beast. But the fumes of the "brandy-wine" were too much for him. Every other minute he tripped on the rough ground and fell down. Neither drunken song nor tipsy cajolery would induce a "stor bock" to be captured. This mattered little, as we found no difficulty in approaching near enough for our purpose. The strange, heavy-headed, sleepy-looking beasts had no objection to us, and only evinced mild curiosity as to our proceedings. It will be noticed that the horns are still in velvet, which accounts for their unusually massive appearance. A few heads were almost clean, but it was still early in September, and another three weeks would have made a great difference in their appearance.



Mrs. Barnard.

A MEGET STOR BOCK.

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nearly 200 years ago. The species, that is, the native plant introduced to these shores, is about 18in. high, branching in growth, and bearing reddish flowers that scent the winds of summer with their sweet fragrance. It has given rise to many varieties which are very showy in the border, and reveal a wonderful diversity of flower colour and form. Probably the best known is the Japanese variety, *D. Heddewigii*, a strain of dwarf and compact plants, and there is also a section with more deeply-cut petals. *A. c. var. dentosus*, or the *Amur Pink*, is very distinct and pretty; the violet-shaded flowers are each 1in. across, and have toothed margins and dark spots near

the base of the petals. This gives the flower the appearance of having a dark eye. These varieties are very numerous, and include single and double forms, the colours varying from the white of albus to the crimson of fulgens. Their culture is simple. When to be grown as annuals sow the seed in March, in pots filled with a well-drained soil, made up of loam and leaf-mould, mixed with some sharp silver-sand. Sow thinly and cover the seed lightly. Transfer the pots, or shallow boxes will answer the same purpose, to a warm frame or house in which there is gentle warmth, and when the seedlings are 1½ in. high prick them out into other boxes, but still keeping them in a frame. Air must be given, however, on all favourable occasions to promote a strong, or what the gardener calls a stocky, growth; and in the first days of June they may go to the places they are to beautify during the summer months. A sowing may also be made in the open garden in June, but this is not always satisfactory. It is wiser to treat the Chinese Pink as a tender annual, and to sow in the way suggested. When a sowing is made in July flowers are not forthcoming before the following year. Choose an open spot and sow in drills of fine soil about 6in. apart, and cover the seed very lightly. While germination is proceeding shade a little, but remove this when the seedlings appear. Transplant to the borders in August. It is a common mistake to leave annuals crowded in the seed-beds, but plants treated in this way are rarely a success. When it is found impossible to prepare a permanent place for them it is better to prick them out again, giving each seedling ample space to develop, until the positions they are to flower in are ready for their reception. The seed may also be sown

## IN THE GARDEN.

### THE CHINESE PINKS.

MARCH is approaching, the great seed-sowing month of the year, and the wise man is he who is ready to sow at the proper date. The work of the garden must go on with strict regularity, and the work of to-day should not be postponed until to-morrow, for that means a week or more is allowed to slip by, and with it opportunities of bright and



Mrs. Barnard.

TAME REINDEER IN NORWAY: A STately PROCESSION.

Copyright

profitable gardens. The beginner and the owner of a new garden should place strong faith in annual flowers. There is a bewildering variety of colouring in this great race, which will transform borders and beds destitute of permanent occupants into masses of beautiful flowers, which are as easily raised, for the most part, as Mustard and Cress. A race of annual or biennial flowers that we advise a better acquaintance with is called the Chinese Pink; its botanical name is *Dianthus chinensis*, and it came from the Manchurian coast

in late August, the seedlings wintered under glass, and planted out in spring. This means a display of flowers before the spring-sown ones are even in bud. The most beautiful of the Heddewigii forms is *Diadematus fl.-pl.*, but there are many selections in the lists of the leading nurserymen.

### SEASONABLE WORK.

March is a month for planting *Roses*—not the best time, it may be said; but when the autumn has been missed March gives an opportunity of

making up for lost time. The plants will not flower so well as those put in during autumn, but with careful attention the results should not be discouraging. Where farmyard manure has been given as a dressing to Rose beds, dig it in now, but only just under the surface, as anything approaching deep digging means serious disturbance of the roots. Where this has not been done already give the beds of Roses a dressing of manure, the goodness from which the gentle rains of spring will wash down to the roots in due course. A covering of soil will hide the manure. This is also a good month to dress the mixed borders with manure, and when growth is beginning is the time to divide the plants, both for increase of stock and to rejuvenate the growth. Dahlias must be brought from the store and started in gentle warmth; the result of this is a growth of shoots which, when taken off and cut just under a joint, strike very freely. When rooted pot them off singly, and before planting out harden the growth well, otherwise it quickly suffers should cold weather occur afterwards. It is well to put well-decayed manure round strawberry crowns, and also to net gooseberry bushes to prevent birds nipping out the buds. Window plants want frequent sponging during winter and early spring, but the leaves must not be roughly handled, as this means bruises and decay.

## RANDOM NOTES.

*The Lenten Roses.*

M. C. Eames.

—With the Snowdrop and the early Crocus comes the Lenten Rose, which differs from the Christmas Rose in showing a remarkable series of colours from greenish and pearly white to a warm crimson. In some forms the spotting is very beautiful, dark crimson on a white ground, as beautiful as in many of the rarest Orchids. The plants are in their fullest charm when the sun is increasing in power, and it is fortunate that the flowers resist frosts. After a sharp night every stem will lie flat on the ground, but with the warmth of the sun they gradually rise, as unharmed as if the night had been as warm as June. When gathering them for the house, a purpose for which they are very suitable, slit the

bottom of the stem into three, to enable the water to rise quickly to the flower. Unless this is done, the flowers soon fade. The writer has seen the beautiful blooms used in the same way as Water-lilies. The stem is cut off short just underneath the petals, and the flower simply laid on the water surface, a miniature Water-lily of wonderful colouring.

*A New Shrub.*—The assistant-curator of the Royal Gardens, Kew, Mr. Bean, considers that the new shrub, *Cotoneaster angustifolia*, is the most promising ornamental berry-bearing shrub that has been introduced to cultivation in recent years. It has been in the Kew collection since 1899, but it

did not come into prominent notice until November 29th last, when it was shown before the Royal Horticultural Society, and given its first-class certificate. Mr. Bean writes that it is a native of China and comes from the province of Yunnan. It was discovered by the Abbé Delavay, and M. Vilmorin, the famous French nurseryman, first raised it in Europe. "In July last year I paid a visit to the fruticetum that M. Maurice de Vilmorin is forming at Les Barres in France. The original specimen of this *Cotoneaster* is growing there, and is now a bush some 6ft. or 8ft. high (to the best of my remembrance), and more in diameter. It is an evergreen; the growth is sturdy, the branches densely twiggy, and very frequently growing

horizontally. When I saw the bush at Les Barres in July it bore an extraordinary profusion of fruits. They were then covered with the grey down, but in autumn they turn to the bright orange yellow colour seen in the specimens shown on the occasion referred to. According to M. de Vilmorin, they retain their colour all the winter. In all probability this shrub is as hardy as *Crataegus Pyracantha* (the Fiery Thorn), and should it bear its fruits as freely (or nearly as freely) in Britain as it does in France, it will do more to brighten our gardens in autumn and winter than any other shrub of its kind lately introduced."



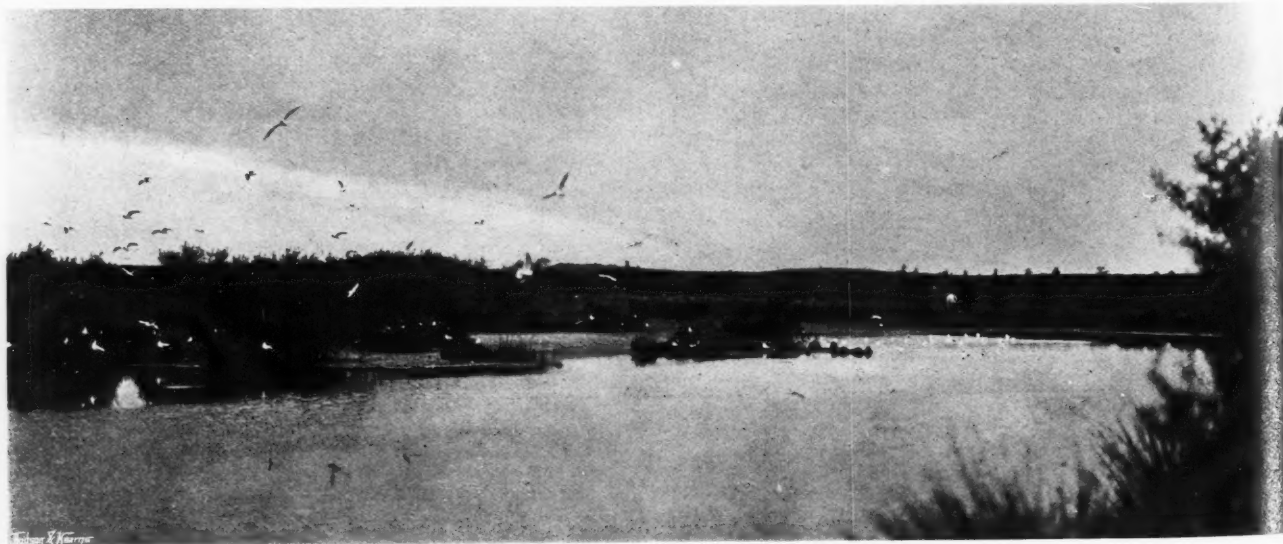
A GROUP OF CROCUSES.

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## TWO DORSETSHIRE GULL-PONDS.

THE laughing seagull nests in many places in the British Isles, but more sparingly as we go South. The photographs reproduced were obtained by a series of visits to two breeding stations near the coast of Dorset. One of these has been inhabited time out of mind; but the second, ten miles away, is a newer venture, possibly a daughter colony from the first. A belt of

sandy moorland stretches for several miles from the sea, and here and there may be seen large but shallow expanses of water with a sandy bottom. In the younger colony a score of nests scattered at long intervals in twos and threes have not altered the scene. A few feathers float on the water, and from the distant road a few gulls may be seen circling high overhead. That is all. But in the first it is far otherwise. Ages of



J. E. Hailstone.

A GENERAL VIEW OF THE GULL-POND.

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THE GULLS RETURN TO THEIR NESTS.

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occupation have fouled the mere to an incredible extent, and rich growths of water-loving plants add year by year their quota to the slime. The bottom (when you get to it) is sandy and hard; but though in many places it is only covered by a knee-deep layer of Stygian water, in other parts the black mud rises above the surface, covered with grass, rushes, and willows.

The general appearance of the colony undisturbed changes as if by magic when a nearer approach is made. Up get hundreds of birds from nests concealed here, there, and everywhere, till the whole heaven is a flap with a clamorous burden. Their harsh cries are eloquent with indignation at human intrusion. This would never do. I hastened to hide the camera in the willows opposite a likely group of nests. Cover for it was not easily got, as there was no undergrowth but the low rushes, but for one's self it was hopeless. Wherever I took refuge there was a nest, and the infuriated parents dived at my head as long as I stayed there. It says much for the nerves of the group depicted in the foreground of one picture that they sat not more than 20yds. from a not-too-well-hidden camera, while the cries and agitated movements of their neighbours warned them that there was a snake in the grass. In other words, a muddled oaf was crouching behind a tuft of rushes, hidden about as much as a stage villain when he overhears some important secret, waiting only for their return to fire his—to them—infernal machine.

The colony is a large one. The whole margin of the pond is a mass of scirpus rushes, mostly occupied with nests. On the numerous reefs and islands of quaking bog, which from their position offer more security from attack, I did not see one eligible site to let. Those gulls which begin nesting first take the centres of the rush clumps, flatten them out, and line them with heather, lichen, or more often simply with the rushes themselves. Later comers must be content with the sides, or, as the photographs show, in some cases with the bare grass. Only under the thick willows is there vacant space. Two or three eggs are laid, green or brown in one of many varying shades forming the ground colour, and a rich covering of dark greenish brown spots and blotches completing the design. During several visits to the larger colony, in which I believe I examined nearly all the nests—and there were more than 2,000—I only saw three cases in which the above number was exceeded. In two more

nests there were four young. Delightful Wee Macgregors in black and tawny fluff they are, but the admiration is not mutual. Make a step too near them, and they are off to take refuge in the water. Even a tiny creature a day old with his brother's still unhatched egg beside him had to be replaced six times before he would condescend to stop and be inspected. Meanwhile, I made twelve roundabout journeys to and from the camera. The short cut might have led to what Mr. Gilbert's Yum-Yum would call a "stuffy death," for even the camera stood on none too secure a footing. The result was nearly a failure, for my movements almost shook the camera legs into the bog. Fully occupied with the sitter, who refused to sit, I did not notice the gradual sinking of the camera. Another inch, and the plate would have depicted an uninteresting waste of mud and weeds, but no nest. The young are shy from birth; but should even a week-old gull be cornered, he will bite you with all his tiny strength. Needless to say, he does not damage you much.

On one occasion a gull just hatching her three eggs was obliging enough to sit to me really nicely, and only the stupidity of my calculations prevented a successful picture. Perhaps the midges



J. E. Hailstone.

UP GET HUNDREDS OF BIRDS.

Copyright.



and general discomfort of the filthy surroundings may excuse me somewhat, and it is never easy to focus the right place when the sitter is not yet there; for, tame as she was, she drew the line at waiting to be focussed, and I had, of course, to hide the camera near the nest and await her return from my distant hiding-place.

## IN THE HIGH . PLACES.

THE throne of Nature is in her high places. There she sits in state, august, severe, majestic, commanding silence, reverence, and awe. For there the morning brings her earliest roses, there the sunset spreads her richest hues, there the moon shepherds her sheep—the little stars. Romance, mystery, enchantment—these are the spirits that dwell among the hills, the sweet compelling voices that call to all who love lone mountain lands and the rare air of solitude. That the inanimate things of Nature have consciousness is no new belief, and it is strongest in the minds of those whose delight is in the climbing ways, and whose desire is towards the heights. Perhaps it is the silence and loneliness of mountains that foster this belief, a silence so deep, a loneliness so vast, as to give the idea of sentience, as though someone listened, someone waited. And the mountains themselves seem to watch with that calm, inscrutable eye that is felt, not seen. It is this feeling of a real though invisible presence in the remote high places that to the imaginative mind has made them the haunts of demons, and the abode of fiends. There is many a lonely mountain pass which awakens misgiving, and dread, and desolation by day, and which the heart shrinks from picturing under the wan glare of twilight. There is many a dense pine forest climbing lonely hills where the country-folk are afraid to walk alone, where the wind has a sad and human sound, and the shadows take the shape of evil things. Here roams the were-wolf, and here there wander fell unholy things with the faces of angels, and the hearts of ghouls. The Harz Mountains, the spectre of the Brocken! the very words breathe enchantment, and mystery, and fear. And yet how strangely sweet is this spell of Faëry, this weird half-light of dreams, this breathless air of fantasy! For there is a fascination that leads to the edge of the sheer precipice, into the depths of haunted caves, through



J. E. Hailstone.

### THE BLACK-HEADED GULL.

Copyright

the gloom of deep ravines, along the shores of lonely lakes, through dim and ghostly woods—the fascination of a nameless fear that is almost delight. But there are no words to describe this sweet bewitchment, for it is of the mirage of morning, and the phantom glow of twilight, of mist, of cloud, of shadow, of the voices of silence, and the fleeting faces of dreams, of the wind, of distance, of space. And just as the sea is a compelling voice for some, so are mountains an irresistible magnet for others. For mountains, like the sea, are a path to the unknown, a way—so haply may have thought many a world-weary traveller—to something better, fairer, more enduring, to the gate of dreams and the land of Heart's Desire. Ah! surely many have found such a way by that lonely path which leads on beyond the smooth sheer rock and stepless glacier to silence, and rest, and dreams.

Who is there who has not felt an inward restlessness at the sight of some lofty mountain range, a growing desire to shake off the dust of the world from his feet, and taking only staff and scrip, to adventure up the far untrodden ways on a sweet, though nameless, quest? Seeking he knows not what. For at every step the chains of use, the shackles of world-worn cares and thoughts, fall off, at every step the air comes sweeter, fresher,

stronger, alluring up to that everlasting pan of the winds which is for the heights alone. And grandest thoughts arise and speak with the still, small voice of Life, and Death, and Destiny; for at such moments the soul listens at the very door of Heaven. Whatever is base and mean falls off and dies, whatever is great, and high, and beautiful springs up and blossoms. The rush of air is like cool-cleansing waters, the perilous foothold quickens the heart and sets the pulses beating. For the mountain spell is not always ghostly weird, mysterious, but is often pure spiritual ecstasy, ethereal and delicate as that inspired by the grace and beauty of morning. Even on those remote wild ranges whose lonely tarns never lose their gloom in the blue summer weather, and whose rocks look always grim and threatening, there is the divine thought of the fair, unshadowed heights above and beyond the fitful light of Faëry.



J. H. Andries.

### A LOFTY PLATEAU.

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wherefrom the eye may look away into dream distances and the azure spaces of Infinity.

It is a lovely yet fearful thing this lust of the untrodden places, a force in the blood, an insatiable craving, a pulse of sweet unrest. For it awakens and cries in the silence of the night, it is a voice above the clamour of the street, a spell more potent than the joys of hearth and home, a mistress divorcing love, and friendship and peace, a lure to far-off alien lands. For the hills of this small island shore, wild and grand though many of them be, do but excite a desire for still serenest heights, for those far-off high places thousands of feet above the line of everlasting snow, where the feet may stand above the thunder and the lightning, where the eye may look down with the vision of a star upon the wonders of the earth, where the silence is as the waiting of the world for the voice of Eternity.

Cold and chaste are the snow maidens that call across the sea, and yet to some their frozen breath is sweeter than the perfume of roses, and their chill arms hold more delight than the embraces of Love. They have that remoteness, that aloofness, that elusiveness, that charm of mystery and peril which are the motive powers of every human quest. To possess them is to have known the ecstasy of danger with its alternating pulse of hope and fear, of loss and attainment, sweet as Love's heart beat in the throes of doubt, and desire, and despair; and it is to have gazed on Nature's virgin loveliness in the untrodden places, where only the sun comes, and the moon, and the stars, and the wind, whose footsteps are not seen.

I have never stood upon the pure white heights of my desire, I have never won to the maiden places, but often in my dreams I see them, those far-off shining peaks that breathe an air which man cannot breathe, and touch a height which he can never reach. And I love to think on those lonely waiting places, whereby the rolling centuries have passed without a human face to bless their loneliness, or voice to break their silence, where the crash of the breaking ice and the thunder of the snow avalanche shall be the only sounds through all the countless ages. Do they wait and listen, these barren joyless places, like the deserted hills of long-forsaken worlds, for the step that comes not, and the voice that never sounds? For I know that they have sentience; I feel their silence crying out in my heart; their loneliness is an ever-restless thought; they whisper old forgotten things, ancient as the birth of Time. This thought has surely come to many a one who has climbed up into the untrodden places of the earth—a thought beyond the last of peril's way, and the desire of unconquered heights—the thought of a strange and sweet companionship with the great stillness and the vast solitude, a feeling that it was for his coming that the lonely ages have waited, the forlorn heights have longed. The silence clings to him, the loneliness implores his tarrying; they have waited so long, so patiently, so yearningly. And he perchance is conscious, with some faint instinct of futurity, that never again will he stand upon that virgin peak, and the thought leads back along the dim paths of memory to old forsaken places known of the worlds that are of dreams, or goes out into the untravelled ways, the far-off waiting worlds that men call Destiny.

An infinite pathos speaks in the great silence, the pale sweet light of melancholy wraps the still white spaces.

Oh, fair and far-off hills that wait and watch and yearn, to whose lone virgin chambers the step of Love has never come, on whose white loveliness the eye of Joy has never looked. I shall never stand in your solitary places, nor look from your untrammelled heights, but perchance in some dim distant day, a sentient part of me, a grain of unforgetful dust, shall come

to you, blown on the winds of Heart's Desire, shall come to you and mingle with your quietness, your inviolable loveliness, a pulse within you, a stirring sense! And I shall be a part of that consciousness which has no speech, and of that desire which is for footsteps far away—the eye that looks from lonely places, the voice that speaks in the untrodden ways. I shall be the silence that listens, and the loneliness that waits.

For I would have no confining earth about my lifeless dust, but I would be burned in the fire that purifies, and I would have my ashes carried to some far height of morning, and scattered to the four winds of Heaven. The high places, the high places! Where the beauty of morning arises, where the glory of sunset dies, where the twilight stars hang low.

And though they lay my body in the dark imprisoning grave, yet shall my dust win up to the sunlight, and the starlight, to the air, and to the winds, and I shall be in all the rivers of the earth, and in all her seas, in her valleys and high mountains, a sentient passionate part of that imperishable whole, that infinite being, which is from the beginning of things, and is of old dead worn-out worlds and new bright worlds to be.

R. G. T. COVENTRY.

## A TRAGEDY OF SMALL WATERS.

WHEN you have a stream of water running through a country it gives a life to it, so that you do not wonder that the Greeks regarded their rivers as animated beings, or that the "dowser" feels his toes tingling when he comes over running springs. The wonder rather is that any of us can be so dull of sense as not to be



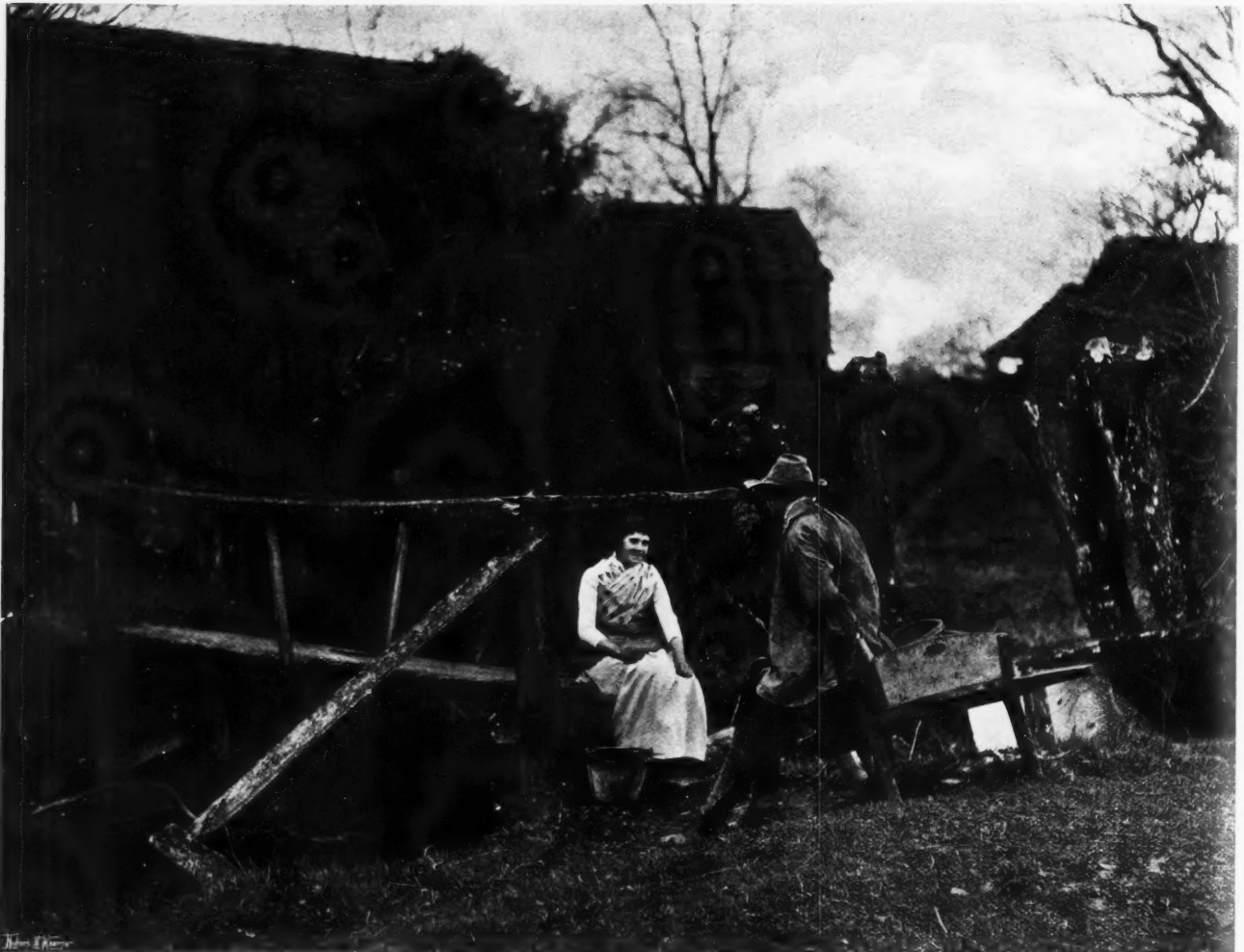
AN ANXIOUS MOMENT.



conscious of the life of the stream. It is not necessary to be an ancient Greek, or a "dowsers," to feel its magic. The village postman whose walk used to be daily along its bank for miles (he goes in a mail-cart now), used to talk to me about it when I was a boy. He used to tell me the tales that it seemed to tell him—of the places up in the hills that it had come from and all it had passed as it went; and then it used to set him dreaming of the places that it was going to see and to pass lower down till it came to be such a grand big river, picking up by the way continual accession from other streams like itself, that great ships came sailing or steaming up it. Then it was full of importance, but finally it lost its importance utterly when it lost even its own being in the ocean. So the postman, who was something of a poet at heart, though it was all he could do to read the addresses of the letters he carried, and could not write at all, saw in it an allegory of human life, as well as seeming to think that such a busy, prattling thing could not but have a life to itself besides. There was this in it—the changing, glancing aspect that seemed so animated, and then there was all the latent possibility of power about it that seemed so wonderful. The woman washing clothes in it could part its waters,

below the mill. Alongside the lower current were shady embosked places, where lassies and lads would linger in the evenings, and there might be gossip in the village street about such lingerings later on, for one never knew where sharp eyes might be. The upper channel went on above to make a big mill-pond, where there were great roach and other fish, and the rats played in and out of the holes in the banks that were all overhung with alders and fringed with rushes. In the rushes the moorhens used to make their big nests, with multitudes of eggs in them that were very good to eat, if you took them before the bird had begun to sit on them. I do not think that plovers' eggs are at all better. Out on an island in the pond one or two of the miller's fat geese always had nests in the spring, and there was a duck's nest or two; so there was plenty of life. On the side remote from the mill-wheel the pond oozed out to a marshy stretch of meadow, where the marsh marigolds always were gloriously bright in the summer. It was a delightful place altogether.

There I used to go as a boy and have great talks with the miller, and hunts for birds' eggs and rats, and everything that was joyful; and one of the things that the miller used to talk to



R. W. Robinson.

A TRYSTING PLACE.

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block them back and make them run this way and that through her fingers as she chose, and yet one knew that it only needed that the force of the water should be kept back and controlled long enough for it to be let loose to knock down everything that came in its way, as actually happened. Once, in a very dry summer, the stream went away to nothing, dried up to a mere underground trickle, and then the postman said that he felt as if he had lost the companion that generally went with him hand in hand in his walks. Sometimes, too, in the very cold winters it was frostbound, but in that case there was always the life-blood pulsing and flowing under the ice, although not on the surface.

I did not see the awful happening that took place when the pent-up force of the water washed away all sorts of solid things, such as the miller's big barn and his wheel, and went very near to washing away the miller and all his family with it. I only saw the result afterwards—years afterwards. A little way above where the woman washed clothes the course of the stream was diverted, so that some of it was led along a higher channel to give a fall to work the mill-wheel, and the other went along, following its own devices, to meet with the upper current again

me about often was the big willow tree that grew out over the pond, on the side where the mill-wheel was, and the barn where he kept the corn for the grinding, and the sacks of flour after the corn was ground. It was a glorious old tree, and a source of sheer delight for me; for the puss-moth caterpillars fed on its leaves; once a tit, and one year a nuthatch, nested in its trunk, for its heart was hollow; and a big trout, that I constantly fished for and never caught, dwelt under the shadow of its overhanging boughs, and fed on the insect life that fell from its teeming foliage. But to the miller it was a source of vexation of heart; and a year or two before I saw my last, for a long while, of the mill-pond and all its surroundings, he cut it down as closely as he could contrive to cut it. It was old and hollow of heart, yet, even so, it did not die. Its roots went on with a vigorous life, as they showed by sending forth green shoots every spring; and this was altogether unfortunate, for it was the root, not the tree, that the miller had wished to kill. If he could have killed the root, the tree might have been welcome to its life as long as it wished; but now he had a fear that the roots might only live the stronger because they had merely their own life, and not that of the tree, to support. "They do tell me," he said, using the





F. M. Sutcliffe.

WASHING CLOTHES.

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phrase that was a very favourite one with him. He never told us exactly who the "they" were that he referred to so often. It meant the indefinite *on dit* of popular wisdom, and he, like a wise man, listened to it all, and weighed it, very slowly and carefully, and then adopted of it just so much as he felt to be true and good. "They do tell me," he said, "that the roots growing down into the bank like this is a very dangerous thing. They grows along, you sees, and they be boring holes through the bank all the while, and then after a while they goes rotten, and instead of a root there's only the hole that he's made, and then the water comes along, and there it is!" This last was his phrase, eloquent in leaving so much to the imagination, for suggesting a calamity beyond all words to describe. And a calamity beyond words it no doubt would be, if this bank which held back all this volume of water were to give way with a run, and down were to go, as infallibly they must, the big barn and the wheel and all the outbuildings pertaining thereto, and perhaps even the miller's neat house besides; although that, it is true, stood just across a little farmyard, so that it had a chance of salvation even if the other went. And that the calamity might happen did not really seem so far removed from practical possibilities, for besides the holes made by the roots there were the holes made by the rats.

They, too, vexed the soul of the miller, and he multiplied cats and traps beyond measure; but if these multiplied beyond measure, the rats multiplied beyond belief, and were even his betters at the multiplication table. He tried salt to kill the obstinate life of the roots of the willow tree, but they appeared rather to like salt, and poison for the destruction of the rats, but they were either immune to all poison or were too artful to eat the bait; and in that there was always the danger of the chickens or the ducks and geese getting hold of it.

Circumstances, such as school and college and the hateful

necessity of earning one's daily bread, took me away, just at this juncture of affairs, from the old mill and the stream for many years, and when I did at length come back again I found a mighty change in it all. The expected, or at least the feared, had happened. In a night of plentiful rain, when the soil had been loosened by a quick thaw coming after a hard and long frost, the miller and his wife, whose sleep was sound, had been aroused by a great rumbling of the earth and a great crashing, and had gone to the window just in time to see the solid world, as it seemed, dissolving into original atoms. The great barn and the mill-wheel melted down before their eyes, and the mill-pond

with a great cataclysm of waters emptied itself almost even as they looked. The tall barn went, and its foundations went with a slipping of earth that stopped only a yard or two from the walls of the miller's own house. The family hurried out into the night, and spent the rest of it in an outhouse behind, away from the rent cliff that had appeared suddenly in the place where the barn had stood; but the force of destruction went no further. No lives — except perhaps lives of unnumbered rats — were lost, save those of two unfortunate pigs that were carried away in their peaceful sty at the back of the barn, in the common ruin. And that was the end.



J. F. Bland. THE GRANARY.

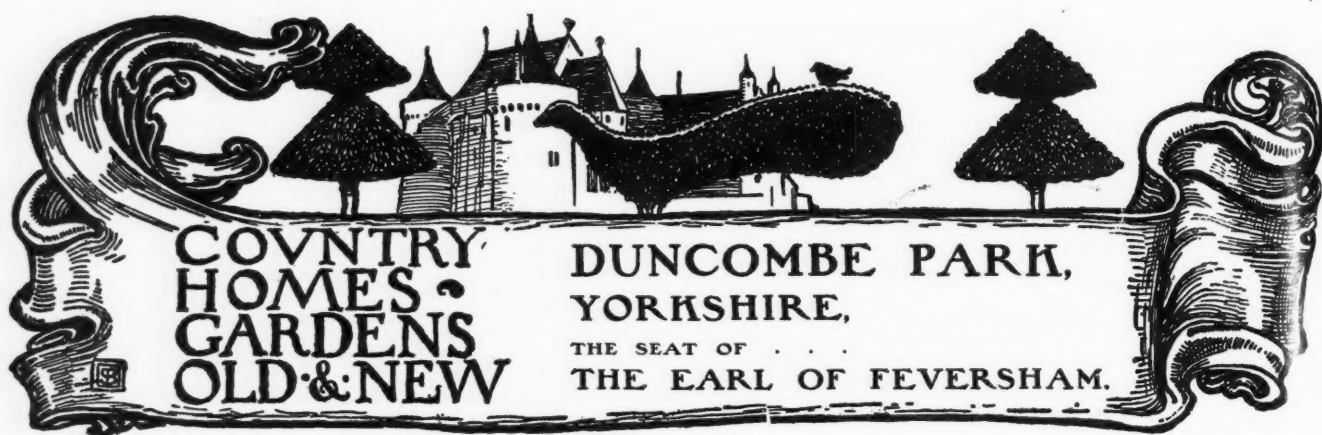
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The mill never was rebuilt. Even when I came back I could see the ruined masonry of the barn, stranded here and there, far down the stream. The marsh marigolds had spread further over what once had been the pond, and all that was left

of the latter was some muddy ooze, on which even the splay-foot geese made impress, with a ribbon of grey water winding through it. The miller himself was gone, to exercise his craft, as I suppose, elsewhere; but all the old industries fostered by the stream and the osier-bed adjoining the mill property had not perished, for I still found the people practising the weaving of reeds for chair-backs, an art that is not now often seen. The postman was gone, too — like the river out into the great ocean — and the stream seemed to me, though still a thing of life, a thing without a heart, going its own pace, minding its own affairs, unheeding.



WEAVING CHAIR-BACKS.



THE palatial seat of the Earl of Feversham is one of the greatest in the broad Northern shire. It ranks with its neighbour, Castle Howard, with Harewood, or with any one of them. Upon it rests the high distinction with which it was invested by one of the greatest of our architects, though fire has devastated it; and its neighbourhood is certainly one of the most beautiful in Yorkshire. Here once spread a region wild, rugged, and remote, and the rapid Rye, escaping from its moorland birthplace, flowed then, as now, through it down into the wide plain which, from the ancient town and castle that defended the approaches to the hill country on the north, has come to be known as the Vale of Pickering. Anciently installed in the possession of many of these broad acres at Helmsley was the great Earl of Moreton, from whom the estate passed to Especs. It was Walter l'Espece, the great Baron of Helmsley—the same who took a conspicuous part in the Battle of the Standard, where he addressed the soldiery from the platform whereon the standards stood—that established the Cistercian monks at Rievaulx, in the dale of the Rye, the majestic remains of whose house are still one of the fairest things to be seen in all the fair domain of Duncombe Park. And in this place it is appropriate to describe that ancient possessor, in the words of Aelred, abbot of the monastery which he founded:

"An old man, and full of days, quick witted, prudent in counsel, moderate in peace, circumspect in war, a true friend, and a loyal subject; his stature passing tall, his limbs all of such size as not to exceed their just proportions, and yet to be well matched with his great height; his hair still black, his beard long and flowing, his forehead wide and noble, his eyes large and bright, his face broad, but well-featured; his voice like the sound of a trumpet, setting off his natural eloquence of speech with a certain majesty of sound."

Such was the ancient predecessor of the Earl of Feversham, and it is interesting to add that he eventually became a monk in the abbey of his own foundation. His sister carried the great estates in marriage to the house of Roos (or Ros) which continued until 1508, but the domain had previously been confiscated by Edward IV. from its Lancastrian owner. The lands were restored, however, to the last of the line, and, through female descents, came to the first Earl of Rutland, created in 1525. The only daughter of the sixth and last earl married George Villiers, first Duke of Buckingham, from whom they passed to his notorious son, and when Buckingham's estates were forfeited in the Civil War, they were bestowed by the Commons upon Fairfax, who was shot through the shoulder by a musket-ball at the siege of Helmsley Castle. Buckingham,







THE SUNDIAL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

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THE WESTERN FACADE.

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THE WEST FRONT.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

however, conceived the idea of recovering what was lost by marrying the famous Parliamentary general's daughter, and, although Mary Fairfax was contracted to another, the marriage actually took place. Buckingham ended his meteoric course in the house of a tenant at Kirkby Moorside in the neighbourhood, not, as Pope says in the biting lines in the "Moral Essays":

"In the worst inn's worst room, with mat half-hung,  
The floors of plaster and the walls of dung."

When he was dead the vast estates were sold, in 1695, to Sir Charles Duncombe, this being the greatest purchase ever made by a subject, and Evelyn fixes the consideration money at "neare £90,000, and he is reported to have neare as much in cash." Thus does Pope allude to the transfer in a sneering couplet:

"And Helmsley, once proud Buckingham's delight,  
Slides to a scrivener or city-knight."

Duncombe was a rich goldsmith and banker in the City of London, and had earned a leading position in 1672. He was Receiver of the Customs under Charles II. and his successor, and became Lord Mayor of London in 1708. There were many vicissitudes in his career, and once he was committed to the Tower; but he was a man of great liberality, and upon his death, in 1711, it was proposed to bury him in state in St. Paul's

lived until 1726. The house suffered terribly from fire in 1879, though, happily, its priceless paintings and statuary were saved, and the place has since been reconstructed and readorned. The pictures show that it possesses externally much of the greatness and "gloomy grandeur" of Vanbrugh's style. The noble approach on the west front is in the nature of *clairvoyée*, there being a grille with solid ball-capped piers at intervals, and in the middle are lofty gateposts of grand design, surmounted by heraldic animals, between which is the approach to the great double stairway between the wings. The features of the house are plain, but the proportions are excellent, and there is an indefinable charm about its character. On the other side, looking to the east, the style is the same, but there is the addition of a noble portico with a heraldic pediment. The vases which crest the structure add much to the picturesqueness.

Two illustrations of the interior show how splendid is its character, and the fluted Corinthian and Ionic piers, cornices, niches, and fireplaces are all in excellent style and admirably executed. The house is extraordinarily rich in art treasures, including many masterpieces of the great painters, besides antique sculpture. In the illustration of the hall is seen the Discobolus, or quoit-thrower, which is an admirable Roman work in Parian marble. Here also is the famous dog of Alcibiades, so called from its resemblance to one at Florence.



Copyright.

THE SOUTH-WEST CORNER.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Cathedral. He was interred, however, at his estate of Downton in Wiltshire, which he had adorned with great taste, as also his country house at Teddington, upon which Verrio and Grinling Gibbons were employed. Of his estate at Helmsley, Macaulay says: "In a few years a palace more splendid than had ever been inhabited by the magnificent Villiers rose amidst the woods and walls which had been his, and was called by the once humble name of Duncombe." The old alderman and banker, who was reputed to be the richest commoner in England, died, however, before the great house of Duncombe Park rose in its splendour. Leaving no children, his sister Ursula inherited the Helmsley estate in 1711, and it passed to her husband, Mr. Thomas Browne, afterwards Duncombe, Receiver-General of the Excise, ancestor of the present Earl of Feversham.

It is stated that the house was not completed until the year 1718, but it must have been long in hand, and a later date has been mentioned. The vast structure is commonly attributed to Vanbrugh, and it has all the majestic solidity of his style; but in the "Vitruvius Britannicus" a certain William Wakefield is said to have been the architect. Of him very little is known, but he closely imitated Vanbrugh, and probably, as the health of the latter failed, was instructed to superintend some of his work in the North. It may be noted that Vanbrugh

lived until 1726. The house suffered terribly from fire in 1879, though, happily, its priceless paintings and statuary were saved, and the place has since been reconstructed and readorned. The pictures show that it possesses externally much of the greatness and "gloomy grandeur" of Vanbrugh's style. The noble approach on the west front is in the nature of *clairvoyée*, there being a grille with solid ball-capped piers at intervals, and in the middle are lofty gateposts of grand design, surmounted by heraldic animals, between which is the approach to the great double stairway between the wings. The features of the house are plain, but the proportions are excellent, and there is an indefinable charm about its character. On the other side, looking to the east, the style is the same, but there is the addition of a noble portico with a heraldic pediment. The vases which crest the structure add much to the picturesqueness.

Two illustrations of the interior show how splendid is its character, and the fluted Corinthian and Ionic piers, cornices, niches, and fireplaces are all in excellent style and admirably executed. The house is extraordinarily rich in art treasures, including many masterpieces of the great painters, besides antique sculpture. In the illustration of the hall is seen the Discobolus, or quoit-thrower, which is an admirable Roman work in Parian marble. Here also is the famous dog of Alcibiades, so called from its resemblance to one at Florence.



valley is seen a magnificent amphitheatre of hanging woodland, with meadows below by the riverside. The Rye breaks at this part into a beautiful cascade, and, as the enchanted visitor proceeds towards the Tuscan temple, new delights await him at every step. Sometimes he is attracted by the richness and splendour of the woodland; then by the river breaking into foam, tinged by the peat of the hills; next, perhaps, there is a glimpse of the edges of the purple moors; in one part

a charming view is gained of the venerable castle of Helmsley, the church, and the old town in the valley. An ancient oak overhangs, and everywhere there are magnificent individual trees and glorious companies of their multitudinous brethren, and the woods, the dale, and the river comprise a series of landscape effects that live long in memory. And the great house itself is there in dignified grandeur, well placed to survey the whole.

But the delights of Duncombe Park are not exhausted with the rare beauties of the great terrace. Behind the house extends a wide expanse of parkland, in itself bare, but with trees beyond, and crossing it by a winding road the visitor, passing the farm buildings, makes his way through a screen of evergreens to the equal beauties of the Rievaulx terrace, all laid in a semi-circle of grass, about half a mile long, overlooking a higher part of the dale of the Rye. Here again a splendid bank of trees and flowering bushes is behind, and an enchanting prospect before, a temple with a fine Ionic portico at the north end, and a circular Tuscan temple with a dome at the other.



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THE EAST FRONT GARDEN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

This terrace was projected and formed about the year 1758 by Mr. Thomas Duncombe, grandfather of the first Baron Feversham of Duncombe Park. What a prospect does it command! Dull must be the imagination of him who is not stirred by what he sees, for below, in full view, stand the noble remains of Rievaulx Abbey, embosomed in a woodland landscape, reflected in the waters of the Rye, with the swelling hills that rise on either hand, some crowned with woodland showing

rocky cliffs and steep escarpments, others with corn and pasture, and in the distance the purple edges of the moors. It is a scene, perhaps, unsurpassed in England, and it is appreciated the more when the visitor has crossed the open reaches of the park, and passed through the screen of wood that is behind the splendid grass terrace. The temples at either end, one with a painted ceiling, the other with a tessellated pavement, afford fine viewpoints, but as the visitor passes along the springy turf of the terrace, he finds fresh enchantment at every step. Then, like Dorothy Wordsworth, who describes her visit in 1802, he can go down to look at the ruins—"Thrushes singing, cattle feeding among the ruins of the abbey, green hillocks above the ruins, these hillocks scattered over with grovelets of wild roses and covered with wild flowers." To describe the abbey is not the purpose here, but we may say that it is one of the most splendid monastic remains in England, and one of our grandest examples of the Early English style.

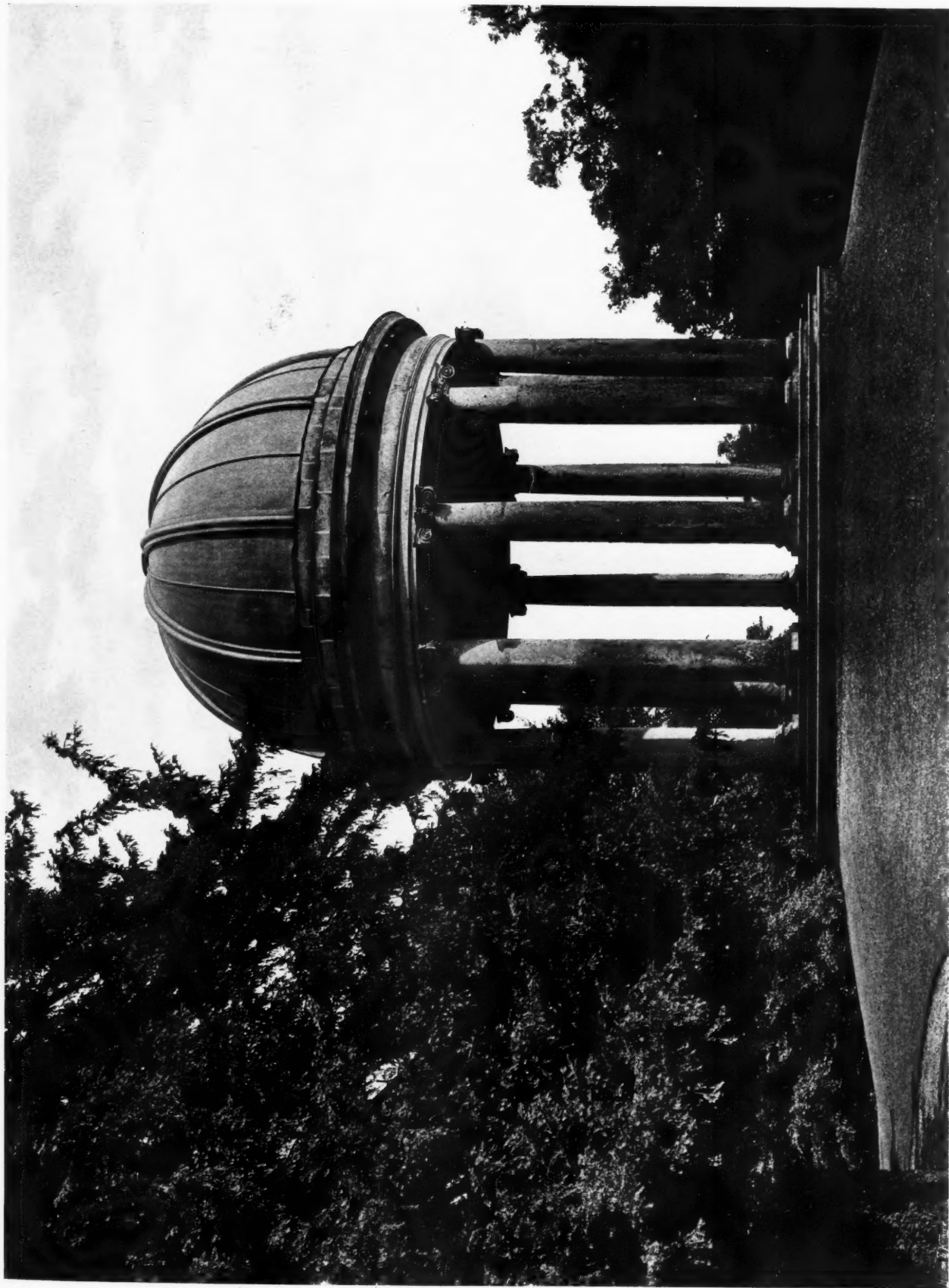
Duncombe Park is a place of many beauties indeed. There



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THE GREAT TERRACE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



"COUNTRY LIFE."

THE NORTH-EAST TEMPLE.

Copyright



is the richest of woodland to clothe its noble hills; there are the sylvan haunts of the red and fallow deer; there are radiant gardens, and sheltered pathways through the wilderness; and where shall we find so characteristic a dial as that over which Time stands watching the flight of hours? On a visit to Duncombe Park they fly all too fast, for almost inexhaustible are the enchanted regions to explore.

## FLORA AND SYLVA.

THE first yearly volume of the monthly review for lovers of garden and woodland—"Flora and Sylva"—gave great promise for the future, and this has been well fulfilled in the second volume, which has been published within

have been produced by the art—for such we call it—of hybridisation, and this object has been attained.

The coloured illustrations are done in the best possible way, and we may point to the *Primula megaseæfolia*—which, we may remind the editor, should be *megaseæfolia*—spring-flowering crocuses or croci, the new tobacco flower *Nicotiana Sanderae*, *Gloriosa rothschildiana*, a wonderful flower for its intense crimson colouring, and the *Magnolia Campbelli*, as perhaps amongst the most perfect coloured illustrations of flowers of the present day, and all from drawings by that well-known artist, Mr. H. G. Moon. They are life-like illustrations of the flowers they represent. But apart from these—and we may mention incidentally that in this monthly review two coloured illustrations are given with each number—are many beautiful wood engravings of individual plants and woodland scenes.

Mr. Robinson has had one thought in his mind in his editorship of this sumptuous magazine, and that is to bring before the owners of estates, whether large or small, the importance of planting trees and shrubs that are suitable for the English climate. The series of articles on "The Greater Trees of the Northern Forest" should be studied by the student in arboriculture, or anyone interested either in our native trees and shrubs or those that have proved hardy and satisfactory in our climate. An illustration of rare charm of "The Great Tulip Tree at Esher Place" must be a revelation to those who only know this beautiful *Liriodendron* as a stripling of 10ft. or 12ft. high. This is a tree of the southern part of the United States, but the editor well remarks that though this most distinct of all hardy trees may never attain the noble dimensions of those in its native country, it is a tree that has a proved value in Britain. Here is an instructive note for our planters of hardy trees: "Any free soil suits it, if deep and fresh, without being wet. It grows faster than many forest trees, is free from insect pests, beautiful in flower, and excellent as timber. To do well it should be planted young and left to itself, being averse to removal or cutting."

As may be expected from a practical worker among the flowers, as Mr. Robinson is, the volume teems with useful notes and sound advice. We grow weary of paragraphs about Bacon's appreciation of a garden so oft repeated, and hope that in future volumes familiar quotations will be omitted; but when we pass from these to such practical advice from the editor's own experience as the following, we have information that is of benefit to foresters and, we may say, gardeners in general. Writing "Of Mixed Woods," it is mentioned: "Mixed planting is, in many

conditions, the most profitable. It is the way, too, that best aids us to adapt the soil to the tree; all the more so if in broken ground, or the many places where we find striking differences of soil in a small area. If, to take an example from a few acres of ground I have lately dealt with, we have a wet piece of ground near a stream, there is a good chance for the Norway spruce, which so often starves in dry soil. Above this wet ground there is a nearly level bed of stiff soil which grows oaks of the best quality. So we have the oak happy here with a few ash among it. Above the level oak bed, however, there are some acres of a shady soil, on which oak starves; so the stunted oaks are cleared, to plant with larch and Scotch and silver fir; and these conditions occur in a wood of about twelve acres. It is not



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DUNCOMBE PARK: THE EAST END OF THE SALOON.

"C.L."

the past few days. An ambitious effort to bring the beauty of the garden and woodland before the general public deserves encouragement, and we are certain that a monthly magazine of so educational and refined a character has a great teaching power, not alone from its many thoughtful articles, but from a series of beautiful coloured illustrations. The volume before us, which is bound in the best taste and printed on hand-made paper, is a gardening book in itself, which will be appreciated by the advanced horticulturist. It is in no sense a work for the beginner. The editor, Mr. William Robinson, author of "The English Flower Garden" and many other well-known gardening works, started with the desire to represent in colour the new and beautiful rare plants which have come from over the seas, and



intended that any hard lines should be drawn between any of the trees, but the kinds run into each other, as they often do where the soil or altitude changes in natural forests. The fine vigour of our native trees may often aid us in forming mixed woods by their persistent way of coming from seed where we least expect them. If in a woodland district we plant an arable field with pines of various kinds we often find vigorous oak, ash, and

such as ours imitating the luxurious surroundings of Southern homes. Almost grotesque is the paltry imitation of the Japanese garden in England. It is purely an imitation—unreal, unsympathetic, and unrefined—a gardening fashion of the moment.

One of the most charming articles in the volume before us is called "The White Willow," and it is illustrated by beautiful



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DUNCOMBE PARK: THE HALL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

birch seedlings keeping company with the young pines which had the start of them by a few years. Mice, birds, or other natural agents set the seed, and instead of cutting out the young trees, often healthy saplings, it is better to leave them to vary the wood."

The note—it is nothing more, page 143—on Italian gardens conveys the wholesome lesson that it is of little use in a climate

wood engravings from pictures by Moon—one of pollard white willows, East Bergholt, Suffolk, and of the famous white willow at Highclere, and we are quite in accord with Mr. Robinson when he states: "If asked to name our most beautiful native I should name the white willow. It is not popular with planters, but if one wanted to make a picture of an ugly marsh or bare stream bank, where is the tree that would do it so well in

a few years? Happily, it plants itself over the valleys and by the rivers of nearly all European countries; in the valleys of France and in our own country, especially towards the east, it is abundant. Whether we plant in woodland, wet or marshy places, or beside pools in parks, or by the side of streams, everywhere it helps us with good effect, the very opposite of the oak in its elegance, lightness, and colour. Where the tree grows well

by rivers or lakes, tall trees of it may often be seen 80ft. high." It is to be hoped that a monthly magazine edited by a master mind in horticulture will run into many volumes of the excellence of the one before us. It is a beautiful book, full of coloured illustrations and wood engravings, and a credit to author and printer. We hope so dignified an undertaking will meet with reward.

## EARLY-NESTING BIRDS.

ONE of the earliest signs of returning spring is to be seen in the rookery. The one I refer to is opposite my bedroom window. A green sward stretches in front of it, and away behind it is a rolling plain. It consists of a group of trees, ancient and venerable indeed, but too large to be classified as a copse, and not quite large enough to be dignified by the name of plantation. Yet it is a true winter

rookery, in contrast with those summer dwellings which the overcrowded birds set up for the mere performance of their domestic duties. They do not inhabit these summer rookeries later than June, but their main home is a resort all the year round. During the short winter days the black marauders start out on their foraging expeditions almost before the early crepuscular dawn begins to glimmer in the eastern heights and gathers strength until the fields are clothed in the pale light of morning. They wander about all day, picking up food when it is fresh from the ploughland and the pasture, and when it is frosty, attacking the stacks and the root crops till darkness begins to gather again



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

A PROUD PARENT.

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over the fields, when they set their heads homeward, and with slow beating of their black wings make their way to the ancient home. They do so with a feeling of security. At other places in the same neighbourhood men await them with guns, for they say the rooks have multiplied beyond what is good for the crops, and require thinning down. But the owner of this particular rookery, like Leigh Hunt, "loves them for

their caws," and would not feel at peace if in the dusk he did not hear that jabber and clangour which seem necessary to all birds before they say good-night. It is always amusing to watch them in the period of their courtship. When the male bird first begins to feel "amatorious," the fact is made known to the world at large by a curious hoarsening of his voice. There is no accounting for tastes, according to an old proverb, and to the female rook there is no music equal to the huskiness that her lord begins to feel about the middle of January. Then begin the violent tournaments of which she is a passive spectator. The two claimants for her favour often begin pecking at one another at the very tops of



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

A ROOKERY.

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T. A. Metcalfe. **THE HOME OF A ROBIN.** Copyright

the trees, and as in the fury of their onslaught they lose foothold they drop and drop and drop till they bump against the ground, often at the very feet of some human onlooker who has been watching their proceedings with interested curiosity. Darwin tells us of similar incidents in the life history of deer, and cites as somewhat of an argument against the doctrine of the survival of the fittest, that while two lordly and robust stags are fighting for the hind, it will often happen that a timid and feeble third stag will come in and enjoy the fruits of victory. But no such capriciousness as that is allowed the female rook. Probably before the battle begins he who aspires to be her future lord and master has selected the home in which they are to live, and should any other rook attempt to share it with her he will fight him to the death. In this case the survival of the fittest is ensured. When once they are mated the rooks seem to stick together and be subject to little further molestation, though occasionally, I think, a gay Lothario will attempt to make love where he ought not to: but in that case the whole colony of rooks unite against him, and peck and beat him with their wings till he is at the point of death. One cannot always understand the causes of their action, but this combination to punish an individual is a sight not uncommonly witnessed in the rookery.

Close to the rooks, but in another clump of trees, there is a small heronry, and the herons begin their nesting operations very early in the year. Their fishing-ground is several miles distant across the plain, and about the beginning of February they are to be seen crossing and recrossing with a steady flap of their wings and long outstretched neck. They are extremely jealous of the rooks, and fights often take place between the two colonies, in which the poor herons get the worst, not because they are individually less valiant than their assailants, but from the fact that they are generally outnumbered and overpowered.

Among the smaller birds, one of the nests most anxiously looked for in spring is that of the little hedge-sparrow, a bird that for some reason has always been a favourite with children. No description would make it prepossessing. It is rather

dun in colour, and in many places goes by the name of the dunnock. It is extremely liable to a disease of the eyes, and on that account is almost forbidding. Yet it has many quiet and endearing ways. In spring it sits on a sprig of hawthorn and sings a love-song in the softest half-tones, so low that unless you know the bird you would never notice it. Long before the first grey buds appear on the hedgerow, long before they even begin to bulge and look like small peas on twig and spray, the hedge-sparrow makes its simple hair-lined nest, and by and by appear four or five eggs of a blue colour that can only be compared to the blue sky or the blue of the speedwell. If you approach the nest, the parent birds fly to and fro noiselessly, except for the soft shuffling of their wings. The hedge-sparrow always has been the favourite victim of the cuckoo, probably because little trouble is taken to conceal the nest, which is never so artfully designed as that of another early-nesting bird, the chaffinch. Country people say that in winter the flocks of chaffinches that are to be seen on the stubbles and in the farmyard are composed solely of hens; but that is probably because the male loses those bright red tints that glorify him in the breeding season. He is very handsome and very bold in spring. Very often his nest is fixed to some grey, lichened ash tree, and resembles the bark so closely that only the sharpest eye can discern it. But the birds prove traitors to themselves. They are so much alarmed at the approach of a stranger that their "pink! pink! pink!" sounds loud through the woodland; and if they were playing a game of hide-and-seek, they could not cry "hot" or "cold" more plainly. When you come near, the sound loudens into almost a shriek; but when you go away, it softens into the merest "peep, peep." The chaffinch is another bird much victimised by the cuckoo.

In suitable localities the earliest nests of the season are those of the missel-thrush and the blackbird. The former gave notice of his intention very early in the year, and won for himself the name of storm-cock, because even while tempests were blowing his loud, strong, clear note might be heard above the wind, as from the topmost spray of a tree he poured out his love-song. No sooner does the weather become mild than he and his mate set about building their nest, and we used to know all the favourite places for finding it. During winter it was usual to cut down some of the great hawthorn hedges, and the dead branches were collected into heaps and allowed to lie in the weather till they had become dry, when it was the custom to burn them. These heaps of cut branches the thrushes used to accept as nesting-places, though, every leaf being away, it was very easy to find them. However, we speak of a remote country district in which the nest-harrying boy was neither so numerous nor so mischievous as he is in the neighbourhood of great towns. The thrush or song-thrush was always a little later than his bigger or sturdier cousin. He is of more delicate constitution, too, and suffers severely in the hard weather, so that often it has seemed as if his race were on the point of passing away from the land. Gardeners sometimes assert that he does injury to their beds and trees; but he would be a churl who took measures of offence against this charming and harmless bird, who is well entitled to any dole or tithe he may collect from the handiwork of man. The blackbird, too, is entitled to free charter as a thief for the sake of the merry song he sings. As children, we used always to consider the language used by the blackbird when a cat or other enemy was in the neighbourhood as but very thinly-disguised blasphemy.

What a pleasant place it was where we used to go in search of the first nests of the year! A sunny green slope fell away in



C. Reid, Wislaw, N.B.

**YOUNG WRENS.**

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natural terraces from a strip of rugged and wind-swept trees that sheltered the tiny dell. A clear but slow-running stream wended its way down by the roots of tall hawthorns, often losing itself in moss and greenery, often circling round plots that early in spring were ablaze with kingcups—the marsh marigolds that shine like fire in swamps and hollows grey. The water eventually lost itself close by the great bare trunk of a fallen tree, that had lain there time out of mind and been used by talking age and whispering lovers. An old friend of the writer's used to say, when he was far away from it, "Sir, it was a spot on which the sun delighted to linger"; and the little wild creatures, both furred and feathered, seemed to know as much as that instinctively. Here the sunshine was netted and held for them; here the little brook and the green grass yielded them food. The rank marsh plants offered a cover both for beasts and birds, and even the hedgehog, for some reason I never quite discovered, affected, to use Gilbert White's beautiful word, this place; and, later in the year, how pleasant it was to see him or her emerge with the little family of piglings! That was where the earliest nests were found.

## WILD COUNTRY LIFE.

### THE YEAR'S FIRST LANDMARK.

WHEN we have passed the middle of February we seem to be able to look back upon the first landmark of the marching year; and the wisdom of our ancestors who chose St. Valentine's Day as the date of spring's commencement seems almost annually justified. It is true that we almost always get frost and snow in mid-February; but it is also true that this is, with rare exceptions, the last Parthian shaft of a fleeing winter. When the sun shines again in a clear February sky we can see that the cold did very little harm after all; and the resumed song of the birds on every hand tells us that Nature is moving on again to real spring.

### A SUITABLE BEGINNING.

The third week of February, then, always makes a good time to pause and reckon up the changes which have so far occurred since winter began to relax its hold upon our wild country life. This year began in good old-fashioned style with frost and a nipping north-east wind. No birds, except the starling, sang on January 1st; and all the feathered flocks of winter had drawn closer round the farms. Even the partridges which had paired early showed an inclination to repent and return to the coveys. In the shrubberies there were no fresh-peeping primroses, such as we have often seen of recent years when December was passing into January. So we had a clean wintry record to begin with, on which we could afterwards inscribe each sign of the growing season as it occurred. Nor had we long to wait.

### FIRST SONGS AND FLOWERS.

Next day the thaw set in, and the robin and hedge-sparrow added their welcome little voices to the whistling of the starling on the gable. The flimsy winter gnats began to dance again in the mild air, and at night the winter moths fluttered down the hedges and the hibernating caterpillars came out to feed under the hedge-rows. In the next few mild days the song-thrush and the skylark resumed the music which had been only briefly interrupted, and the honeysuckle's opening leaf-buds grew greener day by day; while out on the stubbles those few flowers which never cease blooming altogether—the red dead nettle, chickweed, field speedwell, and groundsel—began again to offer fresh bouquets



Metcalfe. BLACKBIRD ON NEST. Copyright.

proper sequence of its seasonal events; and in the first mild night of February the furred moths, which had been sleeping since their last autumn draught of nectar from the ivy bloom, ventured forth, to find the spurge-laurel's gold green cups as full of scented sweets for them as the ivy had been. One by one pale primroses came peeping out, and that quaint plant, the butcher's broom, spread its stalkless little flowers flat upon its one-spined holly leaves. A squat, prickly bush, something like box, something like holly, and something like furze, who would guess that the butcher's broom belongs to the lily tribe? In sheltered woods some elders began to spread their new green leaves in small tufts at the end of awkward twigs; and on the slopes the furze, which had never been without some golden bloom all through the winter, covered itself with the swelling brown buds which contain the promise of full spring's blaze of colour.

### SMALL LIFE ON THE MOVE.

At night the worms began to lie out again, and the newts came thirstily from their winter hiding-places and sought the water-side; the cypress covered itself with tiny cones of blossom, and in the morning sunlight blue-bottles crept out to sun themselves upon the walls. On the warm South-West Coast tortoiseshell and brimstone butterflies ventured abroad, and the chill-chaff was on the move, while gradually, from county to county, yellow-hammers and chaffinches caught the early spring infection and broke here and there into song. Even on the East Coast ring-doves had commenced to coo, and nests of thrushes, wrens, blackbirds, and robins were reported from different places. The rooks, too, had been so long busy with their pests that it is hardly possible that some of these should not already have contained eggs.

### SNAILS AND FLIES.

That the snails have begun to come out from their winter quarters is evident from the broken shells which for many days past have been lying round the stones that thrushes use as breakfast-tables; and in the dusk of evening the lingering winter moths have given place to the early moths and dotted border moths, although these still keep up the safe winter fashion which decrees that the females of moths which appear in that hungry season shall wear no wings to carry them into danger. But when these moths are

out, there is enough small life abroad at dusk to tempt forth a bat or two; while a few clumsy dor-beetles crawl upon the paths by day, and the drone-fly sits to sun himself upon the outhouse wall, mimicking the honey-bees, which will soon be humming in company round the crocuses, even in the North.

### BIRDS THAT COME AND GO.

Thus the approaching end of February finds everything in trim for the welcome of the first summer birds, for the chill-chaffs which have been seen in Devon are cannot be counted as new arrivals, since they are supposed often to spend the winter in the West. But not many days will pass



T. A. Metcalfe.

HEDGE-SPARROW ON NEST. Copyright.



passed before we see the wheatear, at any rate, and after that the earlier birds of spring will come thronging quickly in. And the foreign birds which have spent the winter with us are already on the move. The numbers of curlew and golden plover change with each changing wind, while snipe, teal, and widgeon, appearing in unaccustomed haunts, have been giving the gunner new opportunities at the close of his shooting season. The wild geese will almost surely have gone before these lines are printed, and as the fields fill more and more with lambs, the hoodie crows, which are sometimes their dangerous enemies, grow few. The gatherings of the mallards on the meres are breaking up, and the greenfinches are withdrawing from their winter flocks and returning to their garden nesting-sites.

#### A SEASONABLE SEASON.

So, with the blackthorn flower-buds whitening and the leaf-buds of early hawthorns in sheltered sunny corners showing green, with the full chorus of our home birds in the groves by day, and the voices of the busy owls at night, we see and hear on every hand proofs that we have safely passed the first landmark of the year, and that 1905 has commenced its seasons not too rashly in advance of the calendar, but with good promise of an early and a pleasant spring. Coming after a year in which every season was good, following a previous year when every season was bad, we have some reason already for grateful confidence that the rule of sequence by contraries is not going to be illustrated again.

E. K. R.

## THE COTSWOLD COUNTRY.

TO the fine series of books on old cottages which Mr. B. T. Batsford is issuing, the latest, but not the least welcome, addition is "Old Cottages, Farmhouses, and other Stone Buildings in the Cotswold District." The excellent illustrations, of which, by the courtesy of the publisher, we are enabled to show a few examples, are by Mr. Galsworthy Davie, while Mr. Guy Dawber contributes a most interesting account of the architecture of the district, accompanied by notes and sketches. There is no more fascinating part of England than that which is generally described as the Cotswold country, although if we were making geography to suit the characteristics of the scenery we should include the whole of the land between the Severn and the Thames. But at present we have more to do with what Shakespeare called "the high uneven places" of Gloucestershire. There is plenty of evidence in the plays that our greatest poet was thoroughly familiar with the Wolds, and indeed presumptive evidence would be altogether in favour of the contention. His father was a wool-stapler, and in mediæval times the great centre of this trade was Cirencester. No doubt, then, in his youth, the great poet made many a journey between Stratford-on-Avon and Cissiter. For an understanding of the neighbourhood it must be borne in mind that during the Middle Ages the Cotswolds formed a huge pasture-land for sheep. Even to-day the traveller who cares to make a pilgrimage on foot over this beautiful country may walk miles and miles without seeing anyone except a herd-boy here and there attending to his flock, or in his idle hours making whistles of reeds, and, quite in the way of the shepherd of antiquity, "blowing his pipes and lulling his sorrow to sleep." After the Great Plague and the peasant rising that followed, there came



AT SNOWSHILL, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.



FRONT ENTRANCE, MEDFORD HOUSE.

upon England a rage for wool, which is comparable only to the wheat fever which seized upon our farmers and landlords during the time of the Napoleonic wars. The Cotswold wool was esteemed before any other, and the breeding and feeding of sheep there was a very important industry, and led to the construction of many small towns and hamlets, once prosperous and wealthy, but now either deserted or fallen into decay. You can see evidence of that fact in the magnificent churches which were put up at places which we now deem insignificant, such as Northleach, Cirencester, and Burford. Their erection was entirely due to the munificence of the prosperous wool merchants. Fortunes were also brought to the inferior grade called "Woolmen," and a livelihood to hundreds of their workpeople. Mr. Guy Dawber very truly remarks that it is due to their large trade in wool that the small towns and villages scattered about these hills are so full of finely-built and beautiful houses. Farming in those days was also profitable, and we see by the great barns that now stand disused how mighty the crops must have been.

Mr. Dawber seems to think that the country at a first glance looks uninviting. He opines that the stretches of upland chill and oppress the casual visitor with a sense of loneliness and melancholy. We cannot endorse his view from personal experience. It is many years since the writer paid his first visit to the Cotswold district, yet he has a very vivid recollection of it. The time was just about when winter is breaking and the premonitions of spring are beginning to be noticed. The day, however, was keen and frosty, but the hills, with their white escarpments, lay charmingly in a vague and misty light. Valley and town and woodland and bare moor blended into an inviting

picture, and the impression they made was never blotted out by subsequent experience. We still cherish the memory of the Cotswolds as one does a happy hour in life. Mr. Guy Dawber knows the country so well, that perhaps he is unduly timid as to the effect it may have on the casual visitor; but he speaks with perfect accuracy when he says that "the richness and colour of the soil, the depth of tone in the foliage, and the wonderful deep purples and blues of the hills, all combine to make pictures that appeal to all lovers of English rural scenery."

The history of building in this district is analogous to that of other parts of England. It is a stone country, and the Bath oolite has at its base the Stonesfield slate, which easily splits into slips and is used for roofing. He dates the peculiar style between the close of the sixteenth century and the year 1700. During that time the local gentry lived mostly on their estates, and depended for a livelihood on their produce. It was natural for them to encourage building both among themselves and the tenants and inhabitants of their properties. During the reign of Queen Anne, agriculture to some extent had to give way to commerce, and many of the old Royalist families were compelled to sell their estates, which were bought up by wealthy merchants, many of whom built new houses for themselves. Mr. Dawber describes the building that took place between 1580 and 1690 in these terms: "It was a thoroughly common-sense style of building, based on tradition handed down through generations of village craftsmen, and it remained without change for nearly a century. The main bulk of the buildings were without doubt erected by local men, and without any external aid, for we find the same methods adopted, with but slight local variations, many miles apart. It was a style that was gradually evolved: at first retaining a few links with the so-called Perpendicular work of the preceding century, but slowly shaking these off, until in the course of some few years it settled down to be the traditional work of the day, the vernacular of building in which the craftsman expressed his ideas." At that time, of course, there were no easy means of carriage, and the builders of houses had to rely on what they could procure in the neighbourhood. The change which has taken place in this direction accounts for the new style of building. The cottages of to-day are exactly what you will find in other parts of England. Those who erect them get cheap materials brought by the railways, and what may be called the typical Building Bye-laws cottage is as common in the Cotswolds as it is in any other part of rural England. Mr. Dawber is far from being carried away by enthusiasm for the old style of building. He says it is a mistake to



FRONT VIEW OF MEDFORD HOUSE, MICKLETON, CHIPPING CAMPDEN.

suppose, as many do, that the work of the old builders was always sound and constructional. The imposing and solid-looking walls are very often fraudulent, since they consist of an inner and outer shell stuffed full of rubbish and small stones; consequently they could not withstand a settlement, and suffered severely from the effects of wet and frost. It was quite common to build without making any foundations, and there were cases in which the builders never even troubled to remove the turf, but began directly from the surface of the ground. No eaves-gutter or downspout was used to carry off the rain, and the water coming from the roof was either blown against the walls or dripped to the ground. In a few of the houses having an occasional parapet and lead gutter the water emptied itself through a stone gargoyle, and dropped down in a larger volume, so that this system was almost worse than the other.

In the seventeenth century it was thought injurious to sleep in rooms facing the sun, so most of the original rooms faced north and east, opening off a passage or else out of each other. The arrangement has been very clearly described by Mr. Baring Gould: "At the head of the stairs slept the master and his wife, and all the rooms tenanted by the rest of the household were accessible only through that. The daughters of the house and maid servants lay in rooms on one side, say the right, with the maids in those most distant; those of the men lay on the left, the sons of the house nearest the chamber of the master, and the serving-men furthest off." According to our present ideas the arrangement scarcely seems to be the most desirable one possible, but one has at least to understand it in order to comprehend the task set before the builder.

## A BOOK OF . THE WEEK.

SIR ARCHIBALD GEIKIE is always a stimulating and suggestive writer, and there is at least one chapter in his new book, *Landscape in History* (Macmillan), of the first importance to readers of COUNTRY LIFE. Before referring to it particularly, we ought to mention that the volume consists of a collection of essays and addresses which have appeared at intervals during the last quarter of a century, and they do not seem to us to be quite bound together by the title. For example, "The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin," the essay on "Hugh Miller: His Work and Influence," and the chapter on "Science in Education" scarcely seem to fall under the general heading. But the chapter on "Landscape in History"



THE MANOR HOUSE, WITHINGTON.



fully deserves attention. It is unnecessary at the present moment to dwell on the effect on character exercised by landscape, and we need do scarcely more than enumerate the changes which have taken place. One of the most important of these is the alteration in the coast-line, on some parts of which there has been a great destruction of land, whereas on others the land has gained on the sea. One remembers Tennyson's reference to this in "In Memoriam": "O earth what changes hast thou seen, There rolls the flood where grew the tree," and it is said that tithes are still paid on a parish that has long been submerged; while in various parts of the country there are legends that tell of church bells ringing under water, and they are explained by stones of submerged churches. Sir Archibald Geikie, before going on with his enumeration of the changes that have taken place, classifies the sources of information about them. Among these he places poems first, and, as an example, refers to Barbour's poem of "The Bruce," descriptive of the battle of Bannockburn. Without championing the accuracy of Barbour, he puts forward the indisputable claim that when the poet describes a piece of ground we may take his description as a fairly accurate representation of the geography at least in his own day. Now those who have visited the field of Bannockburn would at a first glance declare that Barbour was inaccurate, as inaccurate, let us say, as the guide who, in an unmistakable Hebrew accent, used to show visitors over the ground and declare "that this vass vere our vathers vought." To quote from Sir Archibald Geikie: "At present a wide, fertile plain stretches for miles north and south on the east side of the low plateau on which Bruce's forces were drawn up." If the land at the time of the battle had been what it is now, then from fate's dark book a leaf had been torn. But Barbour, in the address which he puts in Bruce's mouth, alludes to the morass which the enemy would have to pass by before attacking, and he tells how the low, flat land on the left was dotted with pools of water, and how the English, in order to effect a passage, broke down houses, and tried to bridge over these pools with doors, windows, and thatch from cottage roofs. In other words, the land, now so dry and so well cultivated, consisted then of impassable bogs and sheets of water, and Edward's army was compelled to crowd its attack into the narrow space between these bogs and the higher ground on Bruce's right. A second field of enquiry pointed out to us is in the etymology of place names. Most place names seem to have been vividly descriptive when first made, but in many cases the name has survived, while that which gave occasion for it has passed away; and so by comparing the descriptive epithet in the name with the present aspect of the locality, some indication, or even, perhaps, some measure of the nature and amount of the changes in the topography may still be recovered. He points out how singularly descriptive the Celtic place names really are, as, for instance, that which they give to the highest summit of the Grampian chain, Ben-na-muig-dubh, "the mountain of dark gloom." Ardnamurchan again is "the headland of the great ocean." The Saxons, in giving names, were much more homely. If a settler fenced in his own enclosure he called it his "ton" or his "ham." When he felled the trees of the primeval woodland, that was his "fold," and when he built himself a farmhouse, he called it his "stead." In "holts," "hursts," "wealds," and "shaws" we get an indication where the woods were. In their "leighs," "fields," and "royds" we can yet trace the open clearings in these woods.

A third source of information is local tradition, and to this Sir Archibald Geikie attaches very much importance. We can scarcely do better than quote the following story, which illustrates his views on the matter:

"Many years ago among the uplands of Lammermuir I made the acquaintance of an old maiden lady, Miss Darling of Priestlaw, who with her bachelor brothers tenanted a farm which their family had held for many generations. In the course of her observant and reflective life she had gathered up and treasured in her recollection the traditions and legends of these pastoral solitudes. I well remember, among the tales she delighted to pour into the ear of a sympathetic listener, one that went back to the time of the Battle of Dunbar. We know from his own letters in what straits Cromwell felt himself to be when he found his only practicable line of retreat through the hills barred by the Covenanting Army, and how he wrote urgently to the English commander at Newcastle for help in the enemy's rear. It has usually been supposed that his communications with England were kept up only by

sea. But the weather was boisterous at the time, and a vessel bound for Berwick or Newcastle might have been driven away from land. There is, therefore, every probability that Cromwell would try to send a communication by land also. Now the tradition of Lammermuir maintains that he did so. The story is told that he sent two soldiers disguised as natives of the district to push their way through the hills and over the border. The men had got as far as the valley of the Whiteadder, and were riding past the mouth of one of the narrow glens, when a gust of wind, sweeping out of the hollow, lifted up the hooded grey cloaks and showed their military garb beneath. They had been watched, and were now overtaken and shot. Miss Darling told me that tradition had always pointed to some old whin bushes at the opening of the cleugh as the spot where they were buried. At her instigation the ground was dug up there, and among some mouldering bones were found a few decayed buttons with a coin of the time of Charles the First."

Geology is his fourth source of information. Now let us see what the historical changes have been. At the coming of the Romans Great Britain was probably covered to a large extent with wood and tree, but during the centuries of their occupation, no doubt, some parts of the woodland were cleared. In making those straight and thorough roads which still have been handed down to us, the Roman legionaries felled the trees for 70yds. on each side in order that they might pass along them in security from the arrows of any ambushed foe. Later it was discovered that the clay soils which were so favourable to the growth of woodland were also equally good for the cultivation of farm and garden crops. Moreover, a great deal of woodland such as that in the Weald of Kent was cut down for the purpose of making charcoal and supplying firewood before sea-coal had been found



THE COTSWOLD COUNTRY: HUMPHRIES END FARM, NEAR STROUD.

out. Another change of the utmost importance was the drainage of the fens and bogs. The drainage of the fenland has accomplished what is little short of a revolution, alike in the character of the inhabitants, human and otherwise. Earthquake shocks are enumerated, and the introduction by man of many forms of vegetation among those indigenous to the country. Sir Archibald Geikie summarises the results in a passage which we cannot do better than copy for the benefit of the reader:

"Nature has been ceaselessly at work in slowly, and for the most part imperceptibly, changing the forms of the ground. The streams have dug their channels deeper into the flanks of the hills and have spread their alluvial soil further and wider over the valleys and lake-floors. The frosts of winter have been splintering the crags, the springs have been sapping the cliffs, and from time to time landslips have been launched into the stream channels below. The sea has cut away large slices of land from some parts of the coast-line, while to others it has added strips of alluvial ground and mounds of shingle. Underground movements have contributed to modify the landscape in some parts of the country, certain tracts having been upraised so as to expose broad spaces of flat ground, while others have been submerged beneath the sea, which now ascends into what were formerly open valleys. This sinking of the land in Southern England, inasmuch as it helped to separate Britain from the Continent, must be regarded as probably the most far-reaching change that has affected the landscape of this country since the days of Neolithic man."

Thus the lines are laid down of an important investigation which might very well engage the labour of students for years to come, and furnish material not for a single volume only, but for a whole library.

## SHIRE HORSES.

FOR some considerable time these animals, or rather the most fashionable specimens of them, realised prices which it was perfectly evident were far beyond the intrinsic value of a Shire horse purely as such; and, as a matter of fact, these prices were mainly maintained by the breeders of Shire horses, who were the keenest and heaviest buyers at the sales which each of them held in turn. But if the prices paid for Shire horses were then unduly inflated, there can be no doubt whatever that the vast improvement made during fifteen or twenty years, and especially during the last ten, is owing to the friendly rivalry which existed between the principal breeders, who, fortunately perhaps, were, as a rule, men with ample means to continue the pursuit of their favourite hobby, as may be seen in the pages of the first volume of the Stud Book, which include the names of the Earl of Ellesmere, the Earl of St. Germans, Sir George Greenall, Lord St. John, Mr. E. Holland, Lord Lonsdale, Lord Macclesfield, Lord Wemyss, Lord Penbryn, the Hon. H. De Vere, Sir G. R. Phillips, Sir W. H. Sult, Lord Talbot, and Sir T. G. Sebright. It is, however, from the date of the publication of the Stud Book of the English Cart-horse Society in 1880, and the inauguration of the annual show of Shires at the Agricultural Hall, that the Shire horse may be said to have become fashionable, and it is certainly from that epoch that the public have taken a real interest in this very useful breed of horses, and that unsound stallions have gradually been weeded out, owing to the very stringent conditions which prevail in the show-ring as to the soundness and freedom from hereditary disease of the animals competing for the honours awarded by the judges.

Even in old days good, well-bred, weighty, and well-



W. A. Rouch.

HENDRE CHAMPION.

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balanced horses fetched prices that would compare favourably with the genuine price of an average Shire horse of to-day. As long ago as 1778, Mr. Summerland of Ingestre purchased Sweet William from Mr. Hamilton for 350 guineas; and Mr. Webb sold Old Marston, a two year old of his own breeding, for 500 guineas. Both of these horses were descendants of the famous Packington Blind Horse. Later on, and still, perhaps, within the memory of a good many of us, it was quite a common sight to see strings of colts of this breed at the Weyhill Fair. They were, as a rule, animals not sufficiently big and heavy for the London dray work, but they used to change hands readily enough at prices somewhere between 50 and 60 guineas; and Mr. Street tells us that Benton, the well-known old Erith dealer,

said that he was always ready to give at least 100 guineas apiece for useful geldings. There would appear to be a widely-prevailing notion that grey is the correct colour for a Shire horse, but I cannot say that I am altogether in accord with that view. It is stated in the "History of the Cart-horse" that, with the exception of a few chestnuts, the colours of the heavy draught stallions in the beginning of the last century were black, dark brown, and grey, and there is but little doubt that the majority of these horses were black. The Lincolnshire type became known as the black Lincolnshire, and the best of the famous Derbyshire brood mares were also of that colour. It is, however, noticeable that the black horses were often splashed with white, and that in many cases their coats were ticked with grey hairs; while in Staffordshire brown was the prevailing colour, so much so that in 1806 mention was frequently made of horses descended from the "old Staffordshire brown breed"; and it was only in the more southern districts that there appear to have been



W. A. Rouch.

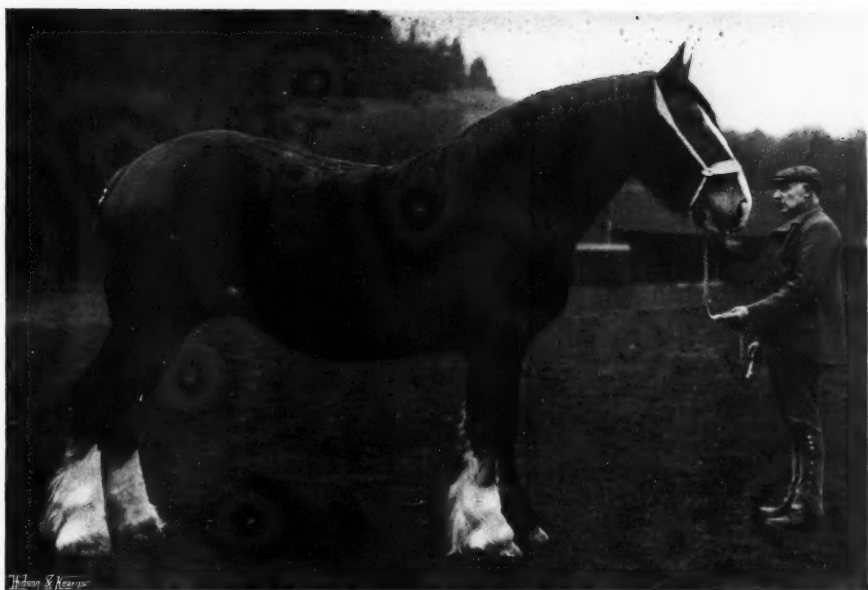
NORBURY HAROLD.

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numbers of grey horses suitable for heavy draught.

In horses of the great weight and massive build belonging to the breed of Shire horses it is evident that it is essential that they should have good feet and legs, though this would apply with equal force to almost any sort of horse; in fact, when looking a horse over it is always well to commence by taking a thoroughly comprehensive look at his feet and legs, and to avoid allowing the eye to be carried away by the fine lines and beautiful proportions of the "top," however good it may be. The hoof of a Shire horse should be firm, deep, and with good wide, open heels, the pasterns should not be too long or too straight, and the bone of the leg should be flat and wide, and the cannon bones short and strong. As to height, that, of course, varies considerably, and some good judges have a liking for a very big upstanding animal; but I do not think that there is anything to be gained by breeding animals over 17h. in height, and personally I prefer a rather shorter stamp of horse. The bone of a good Shire stallion should not measure less than 11in. below the knee, and he should girth 8ft. or over. The shoulders should be free and well sloped, the ribs well "sprung"—that is to say, rounded, like the hoops of a barrel, as distinguished from being flat and shallow. The shorter the back the better; good long and powerful quarters and great stifles, with large clean hocks, are points that must never be overlooked; and the "feather," or hair on the legs, should be both plentiful and silky in texture, and the general type to bear in mind should be a short-legged, muscular, and weighty animal, with freedom of action and great liberty in walking, and a quick, well-balanced, and active trot. Particular attention should be paid to the manner in which a Shire horse uses his quarters—it is often overlooked even by competent judges; but many of the fashionably-bred Shires when called upon to make an effort, do not use their hind quarters properly, and instead of the weight they are required to move being shifted by the muscles of the second thighs and quarters, they lie down, so to speak, on their collars, and get completely off their balance. As far as antiquity of pedigree goes the Shire horse cannot compare with the thorough-bred race-horse, whose records have now been kept for centuries with the utmost care and accuracy, in fact, although I may be in error, the actual record of the breed would not appear to go much further back than 1775 or 1776; though in all probability, if one could get at the facts, we should find that the Shire horse, as we know him, owes not a little of his ancestry to the great Flemish horses brought to this country by Vermuyden and others, who came over and undertook the draining and reclaiming of the Fen countries. This appears to be a much more natural way of accounting for the origin of the Shire horse than by accepting the notion that he is descended from the war-horse of olden days, especially as there is nothing in history to indicate that there ever was a distinct breed of war-horses. History repeats itself in various ways, and considering the class of horses which our military authorities endeavoured to procure for service in South Africa, it is interesting to note that the author of the Hackney Stud Book says that in very early days small horses, between 14h. and 15h. in height, were used as troopers, and that in the reign of Henry VIII. Acts were passed to prevent people from turning out small-sized sires on common or public lands. It does not seem probable that the ancestors of the Shire horse were used for purposes of war; everything points rather to the fact that they were used for the same



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NORBURY PEARL.

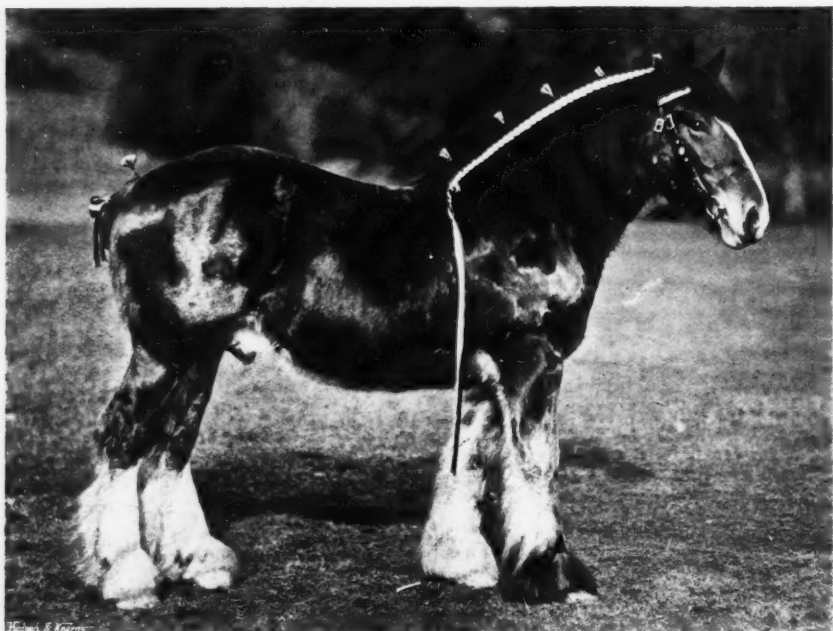
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NORBURY LASSIE, TWO YEAR FILLY.

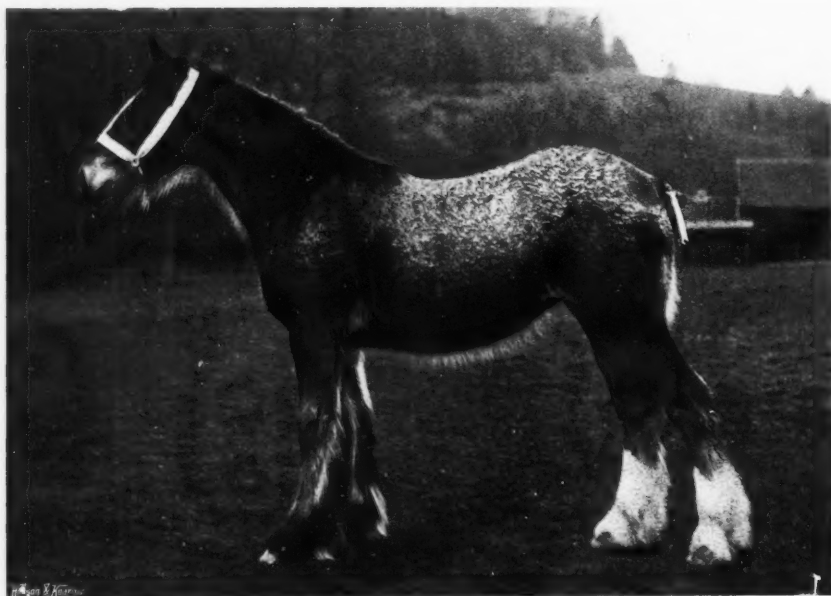
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NORBURY WIZARD, TWO YEARS.

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NORBURY JEWEL, YEARLING FILLY.

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purposes of heavy draught and slow work which are demanded of their present-day representatives. Still further presumptive evidence that the modern Shire horse is actually descended from the horses imported by the Dutch and Flemish reclaimers of the Fen districts, is to be found in the fact that the Fens have always been the home of the Shire horse, and that breeders still think it worth their while to go to the Fen district for crosses of blood which will help to maintain the character of their animals. The Shire horse thrives and does well in rich rank pastures which would be totally unsuitable to the thorough-bred horse, who prefers the shorter and more dainty herbage of a drier district. That there is still a strong demand for well-bred Shire horses is evidenced by the sale of Mr. H. H. Smith-Carington's Shires at Ashby Folville some fortnight ago, when forty-four lots realised a total of 4,371 guineas, which represents an average of about £104 4s. per head; and when it is seen that yearlings such as Folville Jameson and Folville Belle fetched respectively 190 guineas and 165 guineas, it is almost self-evident that the breeding of Shire horses is well worthy of consideration by farmers who breed for profit, as well as by wealthy county gentlemen who breed for pleasure and with the object of improving the style of the breed itself. It would be an invidious task to attempt to single out those gentlemen to whom so much is due; but one may, perhaps, be permitted to say that the exertions of the Cart-horse Society have received great and valuable assistance from Lord Ellesmere and Sir Walter Gilbey.

Great things not infrequently arise from small beginnings, and a not inapt illustration of that saying is the leading position now occupied in the Shire horse world by the Norbury Park Stud, which is the property of Mr. Leopold Salomons, who, about the year 1895, not being satisfied with the stamp of horses employed in the work on his farms, purchased a couple of well-bred Shire mares. The idea grew, and in 1898 Shire horse-breeding was seriously taken in hand, the stud was established, and soon began to make its mark in the Shire ring. Judicious purchases of first-class mares of the best-known strains of blood have naturally been made from time to time, and that splendidly-bred black stallion, Hendre Champion, became the leading sire of the stud. The excellent picture which Mr. W. A. Rouch has been enabled to obtain, shows what a typical Shire horse he is; short-legged, short-backed, with a powerful, well-shaped neck, good shoulders, running well back, great quarters, and good second thighs, he combines great power with all the necessary freedom and activity of movement, and should undoubtedly become the founder of a great "Shire" family. He is still quite a young stallion, having been foaled in 1898, and is by Prince Harold (14,228) out of Belle (9,323), by Fylde Champion (5,268). That his breeding and his make and shape have met with the approval of first-class judges, is evidenced by the fact that, in the show-ring, he has won, in 1898, the first prize Hendre and Shropshire, and the same honour at the Ashbourne, Leicestershire, and Peterborough shows, besides first and champion, Oxford; first and reserve champion, Bath and West of England; first and reserve champion, Royal Counties; first and champion, Hereford and Worcester; and second at the London Shire Horse Show. His fee is ten guineas by nomination, but only half that amount is charged to *bona fide* tenant farmers. It is interesting, perhaps, to notice that, although the Norbury Park Stud have made free use of Harold blood, they have nevertheless avoided the mistake of adhering too rigidly to one particular strain, and have brought in out-crosses of blood which they consider likely to nick well with Harold stallions. Very justly, Norbury Harold was looked upon with feelings of pride by all connected with the management of the stud. A beautifully-coloured dark grey horse, this young stallion was of exceptional promise, and, although only foaled in 1899, had



already won many prizes, including four firsts, a first and the Shire horse silver medal as champion at Tunbridge Wells in 1903, and again, in the following year, the first prize and the championship at the same place. His fine carriage and splendid proportions are well shown in the picture on a previous page. It is, however, with feelings of real regret and sympathy that I have to say that, since our pictures were taken, only a few days ago, this promising young stallion was taken suddenly ill, and, in spite of all that could be done, succumbed to internal inflammation, due to the unsuspected presence of a large calculus. Comprised in the team going up to be shown from the Norbury Park Stud are Norbury Wizard (Vol. 26), by Bedford Combination (17,934) out of Bedford Witch (28,294); Norbury Menestrel (Vol. 27), by Birdsall Menestrel (1,937) out of Childwick Youno (35,375), both of which are very promising youngsters. With them also goes Hendre Merry Lass (6,134), by Prince Harold (14,222) out of Hendre Duchess (3,411). She is quite a good sort of Shire mare, is full of quality, has good joints and large open feet, nice silky feather, and has plenty of clean, flat bone. Taken all round the Norbury Park team is a very level one. Unfortunately, perhaps, the judges' opinion concerning them will have been given before these lines are printed, so that I can only hope that their opinion may endorse my own. All the animals at Norbury Park are reared in a thoroughly natural manner, and are kept out of doors both summer and winter. Care and attention are not spared, and the success of the Norbury Stud is the more to be wondered at when it is remembered that the district in which it is situated is by no means one of the most favourable for breeding Shire horses.

T. H. B.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### ORWELL PARK DECOY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—To the article on "The Orwell Park Decoy" in COUNTRY LIFE of February 18th may I venture to make one or two additions for which I was awaiting corroboration? The area of the pond is two and a-half acres, not two acres; but the present catches off this small area may be judged from the following figures:

Season.	Ducks.	Teal.	Widge n.	Shoveller.	Pintail.
1901-2 ...	1,040	255	101	3	27
1902-3 ...	1,711	166	168	5	35
1903-4 ...	1,357	219	106	5	40

The best season's catch was 3,400 of all sorts, and in another year 3,000 were caught. But the figures in the table are average ones for open winters like those of recent years. It was George Gilbert Skelton, the father of the present decoy-man, who made Colonel Tomline's decoy. Apparently, Gilbert had become a part of the surname of this branch of the family of decoy-makers. By an error, "Wen" decoy appears in the article. It should be Iken, close to the river Alde in Suffolk. The Wretham decoy is on Micklemere.—C. J. CORNISH.

### OWLS' EARS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I must confess I am as much in the dark as "Scops" as to what may be the function of the peculiar asymmetry in the ears of the owls described in my article of December 31st. It is possible that, as "Scops" suggests in his letter of the 18th inst., this strange modification tends to enable the birds to detect the direction of slight sounds. But with our present meagre data of the habits of owls with normal, and those with abnormal ears, it is impossible to do more than blow bubbles of theory, which burst immediately they come into contact with hard facts. There is no explanation of the riddle possible at the present time. As I have suggested, we may hope to solve the mystery only when close and careful observations on the habits of wild and captive owls have been made. It would be interesting to note, for example, the behaviour of owls, such as the barn owl, tawny, long-eared, scops, and eagle owls, when sounds of varying volume are made by a carefully-concealed observer. Do owls with normal ears hunt rather by sight, and those with abnormal ears by sound? Has the curious contraction of the disc feathers, so noticeable in barn owls, for example, when asleep or in a contemplative mood, any marked effect upon the ear aperture? In my article I laid particular stress on the need of records of this, kind from the field-naturalist, and these, I trust, will be forthcoming.—W. P. PYCRAFT, Natural History Museum, South Kensington.

### A PLAGUE OF FLIES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I should feel grateful if you or any of your subscribers could advise me what to do to get rid of a plague of flies. Our house stands up well from the garden, and is exposed to the sun on all sides. It was painted all over last spring, so that there cannot be any dirty corners where flies can gather, but since the late autumn on every sunshiny day the creatures come into the rooms in swarms; the noise they make is quite stupefying, and it has often taken four or five of us an hour or two to clear the bedrooms before retiring at night. We hoped that with the colder weather the plague would decrease; but although we have killed thousands, even now whenever the sun shines, unless we close our windows at once, the pests are in again. There are no creepers on the house, and although we have carefully examined the garden,

we cannot find any neglected corners or heaps of decaying rubbish which would attract the flies. The manure heap is about 200yds. from the house. I think you will agree with me that it is a real trial to have to shut one's windows when the sun shines.—A. L. D.

[It is unusual to hear complaints of a plague of flies in the winter, even in the mild air of Devon; and our correspondent does not say what kind of fly has been giving so much trouble. From the reference to the "stupefying" noise which they make, however, it would appear that they are not the common house-flies, but either bluebottles or drone-flies. The latter are large, brown flies, resembling bees, and their appearance in numbers in winter would suggest that there must be an overlooked and nearly empty water-butt, or something of the kind, standing in a glasshouse or some sunny corner. The large rat-tailed maggots, from which the drone-flies come, live in putrefying water. A swarm of bluebottles, on the other hand, would indicate the recent undiscovered presence of some animal matter which had decayed. A house will sometimes seem to be filled with bluebottles, which have all emerged from a single broken tin of meat or fish that a careless servant had forgotten in a cellar. In this case there will be the tin, containing only piles of empty pupa-cases of flies, to explain the meaning of the visitation; but it is usually too late to look for the cause of the plague when the flies have appeared. Whatever the decayed matter may have been, the flies devoured it in their maggot stage. By this time, too, we expect that the plague has ceased.—ED.]

### A NECKCLOTH PRESS HALLSTAND.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The enclosed photograph may be of interest to your readers. It represents an old neckcloth press hallstand (date about 1760), and it is, I am told, the only one of its kind in London; anyway, it is of exceptional rarity.—R. N. SPEAIGHT.

### WINCHELSEA CHURCH.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—Last week I visited Winchelsea, and anticipated with keen pleasure a visit to the church and the beautiful Alard tombs. To my disappointment I found the hand of the restorer busily at work. The outside of the church, which Time has mel-  
lowed to his own harmonious colour scheme, is being rapidly transformed to the semblance of a suburban wall. The Alard tombs have been scraped and cleaned, till they resemble in colour those plaster of Paris figures which Italians delight to offer for sale in our streets. I must confess that I am entirely ignorant of the necessity for restoring, which prompts undoubtedly well-meaning people to disfigure so many beautiful buildings. Possibly there is urgent need in many cases, possibly it is the one means of saving the buildings. But I should like to ask, through your columns, whether it is impossible to restore and yet at the same time to refrain from destroying at one fell swoop the wonderful colour of brick and stone which wind and weather have taken hundreds of years to produce. Why must the Alard tombs emerge in pinky glaringness (I must coin the word) from the restorer's hand? Why must the outer walls repel you with their yellow and white newness? While writing this letter it occurred to me to refer to Mr. Atkinson's admirable little book on English architecture, and I am glad to find a reference to "the mutilation which too often passes under the name (of restoration)." I am strengthened in my opinion, therefore, that the treatment of Winchelsea Church might easily come under that heading, and I trust some of your readers will either corroborate me or set me right technically. As regards a question of taste, I venture to think no one could help regretting the changes that are being made. There was evidently a necessity for some repair to the church—for the pews and pavement are dirty and dilapidated—but I fear it has not been undertaken with the discretion it merited. A discordant note in the exquisite mediævalism of Winchelsea is a matter for public regret.—BELLA SIDNEY WOOLF.



## TWO DANDIES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."] SIR,—I see you sometimes have photographs of dogs in COUNTRY LIFE. Perhaps you might like to have a very good one of my Dandies to see if they would be suitable for this purpose. I enclose it to save trouble.—M. WALDIE-GRIFFITH.

## THE PERAK SEROW.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."] SIR,—I am sending you a photograph of the Nemorrhædus Swettenhami, for which I am personally indebted to the courtesy of Major Talbot, the secretary of the Sports Club. Specimens of this animal are so rare that I feel sure the picture will interest many of your readers. The only other specimen of which I have any knowledge is at present in the museum at Perak, but the authorities of the British Museum hope that it may shortly be transferred to their keeping. It was shot by Sir F. Swettenham in a rather curious manner. He was taking photographs of the surrounding scenery, and left his camera, with the hood hanging over it, while he returned to his tent to fetch some more plates. On coming back he noticed a strange-looking deer or antelope gazing at the camera, just as deer will stand and look at any strange object. So intent was the animal and so fixed its gaze, that Sir F. Swettenham was able to slip quietly back, get his rifle, and shoot the intruder, which proved to be a hitherto unknown variety of the Serow tribe. The one

whose picture is given is a female, and was seen swimming across a river. A Malay was sent in, with instructions to capture her alive if possible. He did so, but to keep her quiet in the river he hit her on the head, and, although she lived until the next day, the blow eventually proved fatal. The marked peculiarities of the Serow Swettenhami are the coat, which in colour and texture is that of the wild boar, the feet and accessories, which strongly resemble those of the pig, great length of leg, and the extraordinary distance of the hocks from the ground. As far as is known at present, this peculiar species of the Serow tribe is only to be found in the regions in and about Perak. The one of which I have been fortunate enough to obtain the photograph was secured in the manner described above by Mr. R. W. Duff at Kelantan in the Malay Peninsula.—B.

## AN OLD IRISH CEMETERY.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—This is a most confused-looking photograph, and no wonder, for the scene itself at first sight reminds one more than anything else of the back-yard of a country town grocer's shop where odds and ends are deposited. A strange medley of old pieces of wood, like remains of broken-up packing-cases, sticking up here and there, an occasional intact, though lidless, shallow, deal box, 2ft. by 1ft., half full of sawdust, and a few black bottles, apparently flung away, which have rolled into crevices between heaps of slab-like stones resembling paving-stones, but not neatly squared off as we see them in the streets. The dispelling of the resemblance is due to the thick, overhanging ash trees, whose trunks show centenarian age, and whose inter-



lacing branches form a protecting lacework against the sky. The spot is really a God's Acre, and its disguising, distressful untidiness is, we are sorry to say, very characteristic of many other old Irish burial-places. The stones are lichen-covered; rotten boughs from the overhanging trees have fallen on the graves; ferns grow up here and there; and rank undergrowths of grass and bramble partially hide the evidences of mortality. Strangers visiting the spot, without knowing what they were going to see, have exclaimed, in our hearing,

"What does it all mean? What is it?" It is the cemetery of Salruck in Connemara. A very curious old custom is associated with interments here, which has made the place famous even beyond the limits of Western Ireland. A box of pipes—short clays—is brought with each coffin, and a pipe with tobacco served out to the mourners. The pipes are smoked in silence after the earth has been filled in and a mound of stones raised above the grass; the ashes are solemnly knocked out on the top, and the pipes broken or left behind. The small deal boxes seen in the photograph, with remains of sawdust in them, contained pipes used at various funerals. The origin of this singular custom is unknown, but it certainly is expressively emblematic of "ashes to ashes, dust to dust." The empty back bottles I have seen on the site seem to point to the fact that other ceremonies are also indulged in at times by the mourners. The odd pieces of planking, seen in the photograph sticking up here and there, are placed at the head and foot of the graves. There are also a few simple wooden crosses, but only one or two graves bear any inscription. The cemetery also possesses a holy well, to which

pilgrimages are made, but it is now filled up with rubbish, and two ash trees, growing in very close proximity to one another over two adjacent graves, which tradition asserts are the final resting-places of two lovers, never united in life, but who departed on the same day, so that in death they were not divided. The situation of this unique cemetery is lovely. It lies at the bottom of a valley at the end of the Lesser Killary—a short fiord on the West Coast of Ireland—quite by itself, away from all houses, with a small trout stream babbling close at hand. The entrance to it, from the road running from Salruck to Rosroe, is by a lane, beautifully arched over with ash trees, down which almost a veritable brook runs after rain. Ferns of many species, some rare—the osmunda most common—decorate the roadside, and the two carnivorous plants, the sundew and the butterwort, are to be found in abundance on the banks amid the damp mosses.—J. HARRIS STONE, M.A.

## FIRE EXTINCTION.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Referring to your leader of the 11th inst., I think, and I believe all insurance companies would bear me out, that you take too sanguine a view in stating that the majority of country houses are fairly well equipped with fire-extinguishing apparatus. I do not think this could be said of one half of them, and if only the insurance companies would agree to charge a higher rate, as they do with cotton mills, etc., in cases in which their surveyors report that not sufficient apparatus is kept, I feel certain many more houses would be adequately protected, and most of the fires that break out would be quickly extinguished; so that not only the insurance companies and the owners, but the nation at large, would benefit by the preservation of many priceless heirlooms.—J. M.

